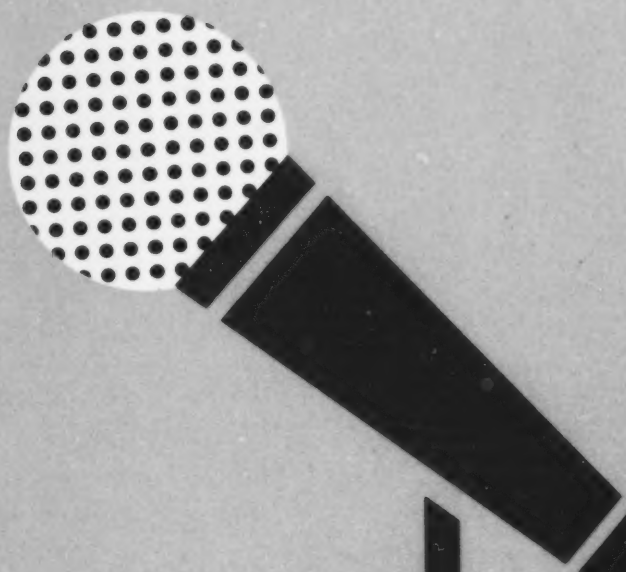
NOTES FOR SPEAKERS

UNITED NATIONS



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Notes for Speakers

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
UNITED NATIONS

PLEASE NOTE

This edition of **Notes for Speakers** on **Social Development** is not an official document and is intended for information purposes only. The information it contains is drawn from publicly available sources and is accurate as of December 1994.

In view of rapid developments, users of this publication are encouraged to seek more up-to-date information. Speakers are also invited to supplement the information in this edition with anecdotes, facts and other illustrative material drawn from local sources such as news media, citizens' groups, government offices, personal experience and contacts. An effective speaking device is to review with your audience a current edition of a newspaper or news magazine, identifying the social issues reflected by the news stories.

Notes for Speakers, it should be emphasized, is not a collection of finished speeches but rather a starting point for speakers, including UN and Government officials, academics, media and NGO representatives, to use in tailoring presentations suited to their own needs and circumstances.

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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this new edition of **Notes for Speakers** on **Social Development**, which highlights the long-standing involvement of the United Nations in the area of social development and provides a wealth of information on a subject which will be the focus of the forthcoming **World Summit for Social Development** in Copenhagen next March.

Our social problems, many of which have turned into major crises, affect all of us, everywhere in the world. Social development is an enormous and complex area, inextricably linked to the political and economic concerns of our day. These linkages cannot be disregarded. But there is a perception that social development has been neglected at the national and international levels, in part because of the serious economic and political problems that have riveted world attention in recent years.

The General Assembly, the most representative voice of the international community, has agreed to refocus attention on social development to better our chances of overcoming seemingly intractable social problems. This is an imperative if our societies are to avoid the disastrous consequences of extreme poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

Social development issues are broad and difficult to define. The solutions to our social problems require even greater understanding and innovative effort.

Already, this decade's cycle of major UN conferences and meetings has witnessed major progress in setting international priorities and identifying truly global strategies to address the specific social issues of education, health, sustainable development, children, human rights and population. Plans of Action have been mapped out and more — on subjects ranging from crime to women to urban problems — remain to be set by international conferences being held in 1995 and 1996.

The **World Summit on Social Development**, a meeting of world leaders in Copenhagen in March 1995, seeks to build consensus on a new approach to social development, an approach which requires not only new thinking but a new partnership based on universal participation. This edition of **Notes for Speakers** draws much of its information and perspective from the preparations for the Social Summit. But the information contained here will be useful well beyond the Summit.

The ongoing cycle of major conferences is appropriately punctuated by the commemoration of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary in 1995. The United Nations is remaking itself and reaching out for new partners to enter the new millenium where all of us can live together in peace and security.

In that spirit, this edition of **Notes for Speakers** is offered as a tool to assist speakers, educators and journalists in preparing effective and thought-provoking presentations.

On the eve of our 50th anniversary, I urge all of you who speak, teach and write about the United Nations and social development to encourage your communities to learn more about the world Organization, its capabilities and its promise.

Samir Sanbar
Assistant Secretary-General
for Public Information

Introduction

RETHINKING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Even a quick reading of the daily headlines today indicates that the world has entered a period of profound social instability and change. Our responses to this pervasive crisis vary. Put in the starkest terms, some argue that our condition is terminal, an ever-widening spiral into poverty and chaos, with the rise of social conflicts, the decline of the nation State and a long-term deterioration of the quality of life in all but the most privileged parts of the world.

Others see the turmoil as transitional, an inevitable but temporary period of adjustment following the end of the cold war, as people and economies grapple with the wrenching changes caused by an emerging, but largely predictable, world order. Underscoring the enormous progress that has been made in the past fifty years, optimists point to the record number of democracies around the world and to the forces for integration — unprecedented economic interaction and social mobility — that grow more powerful with time.

Whether one shares the apocalyptic vision of a world that has grown beyond the limits of its resources and is rapidly coming apart, or the view that, with the ever-expanding possibilities afforded by new technologies and human ingenuity and adaptability, we will stay a few steps ahead of chaos, there is no doubt that the social problems facing us are huge and unprecedented. What makes it a particularly dangerous period is the pervasive sense of pessimism, even hopelessness, that characterizes many people and societies around the world. There is a moral and philosophical as well as economic malaise that is eroding solidarity among people — and States — and undermining our confidence that the problems we face are solvable. In the extreme, this breakdown leads to unchecked outbursts of despair, violence and self-destruction that further disrupt our peace and security.

These are not academic questions. For those who are caught in the middle of the social catastrophes that have erupted in Bosnia or Haiti or Rwanda, the experience is terrifying. **As he fled the massacres in Kigali last July with thousands of fellow Rwandans, Samuel Ntawiniga, a government civil servant, told a reporter of his family's experiences on roads jammed with refugees. "There were people, cattle, pigs, goats, lorries, everything mixed together. I thought it was the end of the world." For hundreds of thousands of Rwandans, it was the end.**

Our social problems present a complex spectrum, from ethnic and religious violence to massive displacements of people, and from unemployment, poverty, and crime to xenophobia, racial and gender discrimination and illiteracy.

They can be deeply traumatic, like the disruption of a civil war, or more subtle, like the small daily indignities of class and gender discrimination that tear at the social fabric, slowly rending the potential for healthy, peaceful communities and full lives that are everyone's birthright. All of us are affected.

While our social problems — inadequate schools, poor health care, soaring crime or teenage pregnancies, to cite a few examples — are reasonably well identified, there is an alarming inability to come to grips with them, to find solutions for them. Thanks to advances in media technology, we now are able to bear witness to horrifying tragedies virtually as they occur, but we are also demoralized by a sense of powerlessness to prevent them. There is an enormous gap between our awareness and our ability to respond effectively.

Our social problems demand more of our attention and more of our resources, but they are occuring on such a scale that traditional approaches are often woefully inadequate. The tried and true solutions — more money, more education, more jobs, more medical care — seem inadequate and certainly are not keeping pace with needs. Key elements — the broader linkages between problems, perhaps — seem to be missing. Everywhere there is evidence of the fragility of the gains reflected in improved social indicators for fertility and mortality rates and literacy, which are among the great achievements of this century, and how easily they can be reversed if neglected. And the sense of crisis and pessimism has led to declining support for development efforts.

The United Nations is acutely aware of how deep the crisis of social development has become. There are Member States whose very existence is jeopardized due to the social conflicts that are tearing at their foundations. Others have recently joined the world Organization, having been created by similar forces.

In the face of these alarming developments, there is a clear sense that we must refocus our attention to our social problems and, by extension, re-examine the role of social development in the overall evolution of the world we live in.

For this reason, the international community is trying to improve its cooperation in the search for long-term solutions. There is a growing sense that international collaboration and progress in the area of social development is not only more essential than ever, but is also more practicable given the end of the cold war and superpower rivalries.

The United Nations and its Member States are giving new emphasis to social development, in collaboration with a vital non-governmental sector and concerned private- sector partners. The new collaboration is based on — and requires — the active participation and support of all civil society.

This renewed concern for social development goes to the heart of the work of the United Nations and is reflected in the agendas of the ongoing cycle of major UN conferences that are taking place during the first half of this decade.

These meetings — **the World Summit for Children in 1990, the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995** — all seek to set a broad policy consensus for various aspects of human development, and social development in particular.

It is the agenda for the **World Summit for Social Development**, in particular, that gives this edition of **Notes for Speakers** its structure. While all the conferences and summits have made social concerns — women, children, population, crime, among others — their central focus, the Social Summit aims to clarify policies and strengthen a unity of purpose among world leaders to work together to address our social problems urgently and effectively.

On the eve of celebrating its first 50 years of work in the area of social development, and unique in its universal representation of the world's societies, the United Nations is the logical forum for undertaking the reformulation of global development policies. The pages that follow briefly sketch the history of its collective work in the area of social development and highlight, using the **Summit core themes of poverty, employment and social integration,** some of the issues and players that are shaping the strategies for our collective survival and security into the next century.

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Social Development and the United Nations

Social development should be understood in a broad sense implying progress towards higher living standards, greater equality of opportunity and securing of certain basic human rights ... enhancing the abilities of individuals to control their own lives through economic, social and political actions ...

— Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali

From its inception in a world shaken to its foundations by World War II, the United Nations has made social development one of its primary concerns. A review of the annual agendas of the General Assembly reveals the steady expansion of its involvement in a wide array of social development issues over the years, usually in tandem with economic development concerns. By the 1980s, UN work on economic and social development absorbed 80 per cent of the Organization's regular budget.

The social development work of the UN has seen an uneven but steady evolution, and has had a profound impact on the policies and implementation of social programmes in countries around the world. Its work, however, was shaped by the politics of the cold war, which often hindered international cooperation on many issues. Similarly, since the mid-1970s, the North-South divide between industrialized and developing nations has highlighted differences in priorities and also slowed progress on social development.

Since the end of the cold war and the burgeoning of a new generation of social problems, there has been a renewed emphasis on social development and a perceptible change in attitudes among Member States that should make possible new progress in such difficult areas as extreme poverty, the root causes of unemployment and the symptoms of social disintegration that threaten human security. There is consensus among Member States that the UN is a primary forum for debate on these global issues and must be a key contributor to strategies to address our problems.

UNITED NATIONS EARLY YEARS

In June 1945, even before the war's end, the founders of the United Nations saw the urgent need to address the underlying causes of World War II and to reinforce military victory with an international framework that would promote freedom from want and fear. Social development was a cornerstone.

Thus Article 55 of the Charter of the new world body mandated the promotion of:

> **(a) higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development;**
>
> **(b) solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation;**
>
> **(c) universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.**

The 1950s witnessed tremendous strides in work for social development within the United Nations. The Organization oversaw the first global inventory of social conditions and problems; it pioneered research in demography, sociology, anthropology and fundamental welfare issues.

The **Economic and Social Council**, one of the six major UN organs, outlined an ambitious agenda for its newly created Social Commission, asking it to formulate policy on family, youth and child welfare, the prevention of crime and treatment of offenders — then known as "social defence" — prostitution and traffic in women and children, migration and standards of living.

The Secretariat's **Bureau of Social Affairs** hoped to avert many of the social ills that had scarred so much of Europe and North America during their industrial revolutions — deserted farmsteads, dirt-choked slums in which infectious diseases debilitated workers, alcoholism and other substance abuses caused by dehumanizing working and living conditions, and the prostitution and exploitation of children whose parents could not afford to feed them.

In an effort to counter these problems, the Bureau stressed such areas as community development, land reform, social security systems, housing, urban planning and the training of professionals in all areas of social welfare. Responding to the needs of war-torn countries, it provided assistance and fellowships in such areas as child trauma, the rehabilitation of the handicapped, the social aspects of health and housing, social insurance and welfare administration. [1]

The first **UN Report on the World Social Situation**, prepared by the Bureau and issued in 1952, covered social conditions the world over, with special reference to standards of living. It contained sections on social stratification in Latin America, the Middle Eastern nomad, security and destitution in South and South-East Asia, the social aspects of improving nutrition everywhere and the conditions of migrant workers. [2]

The Bureau aimed to create a mutually reinforcing relationship between economic growth and human welfare. As economic gains would encourage greater social justice, social progress in the form of healthier and better-housed and -educated citizens would attract investment, raise productivity and foster further economic growth.

The social scourges of humanity — poverty, ignorance, disease, crime, child abuse and exploitation, unemployment, alienation — were to be eliminated by enlightened social policies that would unite economic growth with social opportunity and harmony.

MODERNIZATION MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

Between 1945 and the mid-1960s, planners believed that the model of social and economic development that had evolved since the nineteenth century in the North would "modernize" the rest of the world.

This model assumed that economic growth, spurred by the introduction of science and technology, would transform the social and political institutions of traditional societies, making them more flexible and democratic.

This modernization model soon became symbolized by the big dam, with its emphasis on mammoth irrigation, electrification and industrialization schemes, high in technological content, capital-intensive and largely divorced from community social structures and involvement.

The promotion of this model in the "developing" regions of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean went largely unquestioned until the mid-1960s, when many development planners and scholars, reviewing the disappointing results of development projects, countered the modernization model with **the dependency theory of international relations,which argued that poor countries had been and were being underdeveloped through a global system of exploitation that modernization reinforced. Dependency theorists argued that the third world could only make progress by developing its own resources and productive potential and freeing itself of dependence on the economic and political systems of the rich countries.** [3]

COLD WAR RIVALRY AND DEVELOPMENT THOUGHT

The year 1961 was both a high point of the cold war and the second year of what came to be known as the "independence explosion", the emergence of new States from vast colonial territories, notably on the African continent. The United States and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) were vigorously competing for the allegiance of these new countries.

In his first address to the 86-member General Assembly, the new President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, called for the launching of the first **United Nations Decade of Development**, stating that:

> "Political sovereignty is but a mockery without the means of meeting poverty, illiteracy and disease. Self-determination is but a slogan if the future holds no hope."

While President Kennedy focused on social ills, Ambassador Andrei Gromyko of the former USSR articulated before the Assembly issues that would become long-standing preoccupations of developing countries during the 1970s and 1980s. He called for:

- **The establishment of just and stable prices for raw materials;**
- **The elimination of inequitable economic agreements;**
- **The transformation of economic relations between the industrialized and non-industrialized nations.** [4]

From that point on, the new terrain of development was another battlefield of the cold war, each of the superpowers, soon to be joined by China, offering aid in accordance with its strategic objective of the moment.

Yet despite their enormous differences, both capitalism and Communism regarded the economy as their point of departure; both also regarded intensive industrialization as the dynamo of growth that could pay for social goods, whether primary health care or university education.

In the early 1960s, both camps would have been hard put to distinguish between "growth" and "development". **Both shared another central concept: human resources were a form of capital, like natural resources, to be mobilized and developed.** [5]

THE FIRST DEVELOPMENT DECADE

The **International Development Strategy** of the first United Nations Decade of Development stated that "since educated and trained people are always the chief agents of development", high priority should be given during the Decade to **"establishing educational systems well adapted to the economic and social needs of the developing countries".**

It also urged that national and international efforts be concentrated on three objectives:

- **Making better use of the labour force by creating higher levels of productive employment;**
- **Improving the quality of the labour force by vocational education and training;**
- **Enlisting popular support for the tasks of national development.** [6]

Reflecting a different and in some ways simpler era, the stated objectives of the first International Development Strategy made no reference to ethnic or religious diversity — or even gender differences and other human variables that would later be identified as playing important roles in the successes and failures of development programmes.

RESPONSE OF THE UNITED NATIONS FAMILY

The modernization model of development was also propelled by enormous confidence in the universality of science and human rationality.

Talent, research and knowledge, it was assumed, could be pooled to release untapped wealth the world over. Scientific minds would meet, regardless of their ideological or cultural backgrounds, to make efficient use of newly discovered natural resources.

Just, democratic governance — however defined — aided by technical assistance from the industrialized countries in public administration, would distribute the benefits of development fairly throughout the growing populations of the new States — as it was hoped it was doing in the North, whether in capitalist, socialist or Communist countries. **Although much of this vision remained unrealized, the United Nations family fostered major achievements in social development.** The research of the UN Bureau of Social Affairs generated information that led to important efforts at standard-setting and models for

national programmes in health, education, governance, technical training and a variety of other fields. Emerging countries had access to models for their public health and education systems, for example, without having to go through the long process of inventing their national systems.

From the 1950s onwards, the specialized agencies of the UN system mobilized to undertake tremendous social tasks:

- **The World Health Organization (WHO) was energetically moving to control infectious diseases and framing strategies to eliminate virulent plagues such as smallpox;**

- **The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was mounting mass feeding campaigns, combating malaria and inoculating the young against major childhood killers;**

- **In addition to battling against the age-old scourge of locusts, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) was helping Governments implement land reform programmes and improve food distribution networks;**

- **The International Labour Organization (ILO) launched employment and vocational training programmes not only in Europe, but in Asia and Latin America, which not only needed trained professionals in such fields as law, medicine, architecture and civil engineering, but desperately lacked technicians who could build and operate power plants or work on assembly lines;**

- **The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was experimenting with new means, such as radio and television, to overcome illiteracy. It was also rebuilding libraries throughout the war-torn nations and helping to establish them in the new and newly independent States;**

- **Agricultural research institutes developed new high-yield, disease-resistant hybrids of staple grains that fueled the "green revolution" – and, with it, the hope that famine would at last be conquered. The conflict over genetic resources that was to erupt in the 1980s was as yet undreamed of, just as the negative side effects of the "green revolution" would appear only much later;** [7]

- **Development thinkers of the 1960s spoke frequently in utopian terms of technological "leapfrogs" to transform landscapes of poverty and underdevelopment;** [8]

- **The auguries were favourable: life expectancy increased during the 1950s and 1960s and the infant mortality rate dropped significantly in most poor countries, as did illiteracy rates.**

DECLARATION ON SOCIAL PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1969, the General Assembly adopted the **United Nations Declaration on Social Progress and Development**, a social charter that is important reading today for those preparing for the World Summit for Social Development.

The Declaration stated that "man can achieve complete fulfilment of his aspirations only within a just social order".

It also emphasized "the interdependence of economic and social development in the wider process of growth and change, as well as the importance of a strategy of integrated development which takes full account at all stages of its social aspects ..."

Many of its concerns anticipated those being voiced in today's debate on social development, among them:

- **"The active participation of all elements of society, individually or through associations, in defining and in achieving the common goals of development with full respect for the fundamental freedoms embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." (Article 5)**

- **"The assurance to disadvantaged or marginal sectors of the population of equal opportunities for social and economic advancement in order to achieve an effectively integrated society." (Article 5)**

- **"...the assurance to everyone of the right to work and the free choice of employment..." (Article 7)**

- **"..the elimination of poverty; the assurance of a steady improvement in levels of living and of a just and equitable distribution of income." (Article 10)**

The Declaration also reflected the extent to which social development was viewed as primarily a national rather than international concern.

> It stipulated as a primary condition of social progress and development "the right and responsibility of each State and, as far as they are concerned, each nation and people, to determine freely its own objectives of social development, and to set its own priorities and to decide in conformity with the principles of the Charter the means and methods of their achievement without any external interference." (Article 3)

This emphasis on national sovereignty, enshrined in the UN Charter, was a constant concern during the cold-war years, particularly among developing countries. As social and political problems become increasingly transnational in scope, however, the issue of sovereignty versus the responsibilities of the international community has become increasingly central to the development debate.

EMERGING PROBLEMS AND PATHBREAKING UN CONFERENCES

Even in 1969, many social ills had clearly crossed national frontiers to become legitimate concerns of the international community. Despite some successes, the international economic integration approach to development also generated problems, as revealed by the global reviews undertaken by the United Nations in its periodic **Reports on the World Social Situation.**

Rural poverty in developing countries, for example, led to the transnational migration of men seeking work, often followed by their families; Western Europe and North America welcomed their menial labour, but in many respects they remained second-class citizens.

Declining mortality rates worldwide, increasing urban concentration and poorly planned industrialization in both rich and poor nations, as well as extravagant consumption patterns — particularly in the developed countries — were taking a terrible toll on the environment and slowing social progress.

In 1966, the General Assembly had asked the United Nations system to provide assistance in the field of population activities and created the **UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)**, now known as the **UN Population Fund.** Two years later, it called for a conference on the human environment. Both issues revealed a polarity wider and deeper than the capitalist-Communist, East-West split — the growing cleavage between North and South.

At the 1972 **United Nations Conference on the Human Environment** in Stockholm, a ground-breaking meeting in this new domain whose international parameters were little understood, many southern countries strongly resisted global regulatory attempts by northern States that might limit their fledgling industrial efforts.

Nonetheless, from a bitter debate that included charges of "imperialist policies of plunder, aggression and war" and the continuing "environmental despoilation of colonialism", there arose careful compromises stipulating that "the environmental policies of all States should enhance and not adversely affect the present or future development potential of developing countries, nor ... hamper the attainment of better living conditions for all ..."

In 1974, the **World Food Conference** was convened in the face of famines and the alarming depletion of global food stocks. The Conference established the **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** and assured the "common responsibility" of the world community to ensure adequate food supplies for all.

At the first **International Conference on Population and Development**, held in Bucharest in 1974, a number of southern countries argued that attempts to set targets for reducing population growth amounted to interference in the internal affairs of States.

Not until the 1980s did most southern Governments publicly acknowledge that the combination of unprecedented population growth and ecological deterioration was creating enormous obstacles to continuing development, economic as well as social. In 1984 in Mexico City, the second **International Conference on Population and Development** stated that "realistic" development policies had to "reflect the inextricable links between population, resources, environment and development".

These themes received great attention, too, at the **World Conferences on Women** held in 1980 and 1985. In Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the **UN Conference on Environment and Development**, known as the **Earth Summit**, adopted the concept of "sustainable development" — development that meets present needs without jeopardizing the welfare of

future generations by undermining the environment on which all life depends — and declared that "States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem ... bearing common but differentiated responsibilities ... in view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation".

A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

These agreements, though, did little to bridge the growing economic gap between the industrialized countries of the North and the developing countries of the South that was the central concern of the Second International Development Decade for the 1970s. As the North-South divide began to overshadow East-West rivalries, economic concerns also began to eclipse social needs.

In 1971, the Bretton Woods monetary system, supported by most market economies, went into crisis. As hostilities again broke out in the Middle East in 1973, oil prices quadrupled, spawning an inflationary spiral, greater trade imbalances and growing debt burdens.

Meeting in Algiers in September 1973, the Heads of State of the Non-Aligned countries stated that the **Second Development Decade (1971-1980)** was failing, citing the inability of Member States to attain the goals of the decade, which had emphasized increasing development assistance to reduce the gap between rich and poor countries.

Seizing on the leverage of high oil prices that a few southern countries were enjoying, the developing countries organized themselves as the **Group of 77** and called for a transformation of prevailing economic patterns. This demand led to a special 1974 session of the General Assembly, which called for the establishment of a **New International Economic Order (NIEO).**[9]

That Declaration stated that "the developing world [had] emerged as a powerful influence in international activity. Hence, an active, full and equal participation of the developing countries [was] necessary in the formulation and application of all decisions that concerned the international community."

In the 20 principles on which the NIEO was to be founded, social concerns were clearly superseded by economic preoccupations. **Developing countries made it clear that international economic parity was a primary goal, and that national social progress was contingent on a more balanced international economic environment.**

The countries of the South, however, soon lost the bargaining power that had been gained by the oil exporting countries. With petroleum prices declining in the early 1980s, the commodity boom of the first years of the decade also proved to be short-lived. The debt burden of the southern States increased, while the net flow of official development assistance in 1975 stood at only 0.33 per cent, less than half the 0.7 per cent target set in 1970 by the International Development Strategy of the Second Development Decade.

The issues invoked by the southern countries in their call for a New International Economic Order continued to be priorities for the Group of 77 through the 1980s. Although international attention focused heavily on such problems as the prices of raw materials and primary commodities, the international monetary system, the transfer of technology, the regulation of transnational corporations and the permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources, little progress was made in improving international relations.

BASIC NEEDS POLICIES

Striving towards the balance between social and economic concerns prevalent in the developmental thinking of the 1950s and 1960s, a number of organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, notably the ILO, joined by the World Bank, WHO, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNICEF, put forth the concept of fulfilling the **"basic needs"** of growing numbers of the world's poor, who had so far failed to benefit from the modernization approach to development.

The ILO defined basic needs as adequate nutrition, housing, clean water, health services, education and employment, as well as the participation of people in making the decisions that affect them through organizations of their own choice.

Rural communities remained impoverished. Shanties mushroomed in and around the cities of developing countries, with migrants from the countryside besieging urban centres in search of work. Despite the fact that the Green Revolution was increasing food security, especially in Asia, its emphasis on expensive technology excluded most small landholders, many of whom were women.

As central as the World Bank was to addressing basic needs of people living in poverty, this policy gave way to efforts to reform national economic and administrative policies during the 1980s in order to promote both domestic and international investment. **Arguing that inefficient State involvement in economic planning and activity was a crucial brake on development, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund required countries to apply rigorous structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), which were designed to restore fiscal balances and encourage market-friendly reforms, as a condition for loans.**

NEW ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT

Although the idea of popular participation in development was widely discussed during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, concern over economic recession and debt dominated the development debate. According to the UNDP Round-Table on Global Change, held in Stockholm in July 1994, the 1980s witnessed: **"... the return to an older developmental paradigm: first economic growth, then everything else will follow ... Gone was the idea that economic and social goals were one. Gone was the belief that attaining one goal without the other would lead to disaster. Development experts seemed to have forgotten that too much emphasis on social goals without sufficient attention to economic goals leads to bankruptcy. They also seemed to have forgotten that too much attention to economic goals without enough attention to social goals leads to unrest and an end to economic growth."** [10]

By 1990, the General Assembly called the 1980s "a decade lost for development." Its Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, stated:

> "Living conditions in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, and in parts of Asia, deteriorated, and economic and social infrastructure eroded, impairing stability and prospects for growth and development ..." [11]

At the same time, there was a growing perception that Governments had become ineffective, unable to deal effectively with international problems, ranging from the depletion of the ozone layer to unstable commodity prices, and too unwieldly to deal effectively with issues at the local level.

Far from remaining national, social problems are increasingly erupting across frontiers everywhere. Faced by shrinking job opportunities for their own citizens and ugly incidents of xenophobia, the Governments of many industrialized countries are making attempts to seal their borders to illegal migrants from the South.

The spread of consumerism, the ubiquity of western popular culture and the freer flow of information have aroused tensions throughout traditional societies undergoing rapid socio-economic change, particularly in developing countries. The rise of religious fundamentalism is in part a reaction to the penetration of these new values and ideas.

Paradoxically, large-scale international conflicts are diminishing in number, as local hostilities have increased. Of the 82 conflicts that have broken out since 1991, 79 have been internal civil strife. [12]

The UN has heeded the Secretary-General's calls for a major review of such concepts as sovereignty, the Nation State, aid and development itself.

> "Development as a common cause is in danger of fading from the forefront of our agenda", the Secretary-General recently observed in his initial proposals for **An Agenda for Development.** "The competition for influence during the cold war stimulated interest in development. The motives were not always altruistic, but countries seeking to develop could benefit from that interest. Today, the competition to bring development to the poorest countries has ended. Many donors have grown weary of the task. Many of the poor are dispirited. Development is in crisis." [13]

DONOR FATIGUE

With the cold war at an end and military spending continuing a six-year decline, there was hope in many quarters that there could be a wholesale redirection of human energies and resources into efforts to reduce global poverty. Instead, development has fallen into crisis — partly a consequence, ironically, of the end of the competition between the superpowers for Third World allies.

There is also donor fatigue reflected in the fact that offical development aid from the industrial North to the developing South has recently declined. Between 1992 and 1993, total official development assistance from the 24 major industrialized nations fell by 10 per cent, from $60.8 billion to $54.8 billion.

A major factor in the drop appears to have been a sharp rise in spending by the North on United Nations peace-keeping operations, for example, which grew from less than $300 million in 1988 to more than $3.6 billion in 1993.

"Today armed conflicts and humanitarian emergencies are spreading", said UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth. "These acute crises are a double tragedy: not only do they devastate people and landscapes, but they also divert financial resources and human energies from the causes of sustainable human development."

Another factor is that a growing number of donor Governments — as well as banks and agencies that depend on their contributions — have cut back or frozen their develop-

ment aid programmes, due in part to their own budget deficits.

Concerns regarding the effectiveness of development assistance have also had an impact on foreign aid spending:

> "Since 1960, about $1.4 trillion (in 1988 dollars) has been transferred in aid from rich countries to poor ones", a recent report in **The Economist** magazine noted. "Yet relatively little is known about what that process has achieved. Has it relieved poverty? Has it stimulated growth in the recipient countries? Has it helped the countries which give it? Such questions become more pressing as donor Governments try harder to curb public spending."[14]

Donor fatigue has spurred the efforts to reform development policies to make international development efforts more efficient and effective.

AN AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Secretary-General's report on **An Agenda for Development** prompted a spirited discussion at the high-level meeting of ECOSOC in Geneva in June 1994 and the World Hearings on Development organized by the President of the General Assembly later that month. It was also the subject of discussion in the General Assembly at its 49th session as it debated the evolving role of the international community in development.

A counterpoint to the Secretary-General's ground-breaking 1992 **Agenda for Peace**, his initial proposals for **An Agenda for Development** seek to offset perceptions, most often voiced by developing countries, that the UN is focusing on peace-keeping to the detriment of development. The Secretary-General calls for a new "culture of development" requiring renewed solidarity among peoples and States.

The wide-ranging report outlines five interrelated dimensions that the Secretary-General believes are crucial to successful development: **peace, economic growth, environmental protection, healthy social conditions and democracy**. Only a comprehensive framework will provide long-term solutions to conflict.

The Secretary-General, asserting that the concept of development is one of the great achievements of this century, warns that "development as a common cause is in danger of fading from the forefront of our agenda."

"Development has to be oriented towards each person," he states. "Beyond this must rise a recognition that this human community includes generations yet to come."

The United Nations must continue to play a central role in development efforts, although many changes are needed to make them effective. "Over the years, the absence of clear policy guidance from the General Assembly, and the lack of effective policy coordination and control by the Economic and Social Council, has resulted in an overall lack of cohesion and focus within the system."

"The current situation calls for wider intellectual understanding, deeper moral commitment and effective policy measures," he says. "Without them, a half-century of considerable progress could be undermined. Worse, all peoples of the world will live on a deteriorating planet, and increasingly lose the ability to shape their destiny in a coherent way."

NEW MEASURES OF DEVELOPMENT

Much of recent development thinking has been a re-examination of growth in relation to quality of life and income in relation to well-being. The **Human Development Index**, pioneered by UNDP since 1990, stresses income distribution rather than the traditional measure of gross national product per capita. The **Index** factors in other social indicators reflecting life expectancy, years of schooling and gender equity.

Like attempts by UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO to chart social progress, the **Index** addresses the limitations of traditional measures. Citizens of two countries with the same GNP per capita may lead quite different lives.

The post-cold-war world, in which the market economy has become the dominant frame of reference, challenges the international community to attain a balanced and integrated set of economic, financial and social policies. It also challenges leaders to bear in mind that economic gains are not necessarily prerequisites to the fulfilment of important choices and to take a fresh, hard look at the priorities and policies that guide development efforts.

As the 1994 **Human Development Report** puts it, "... individuals and societies make many choices that require no wealth at all. A society does not have to be rich to be able to afford democracy. A family does not have to be wealthy to respect the rights of each member. A nation does not have to be affluent to treat women and men equally. Valuable social and cultural traditions can be — and are — maintained at all levels of income. The richness of a culture can be largely independent of the people's wealth ..." [15]

This concept of human development also rejects the concentration on people as human capital. By contrast, it stresses creating the economic and political environment in which people can expand their human capabilities. [16]

A RENEWED PRIORITY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

This new period of transition was heralded by the 1990 **World Summit for Children** and the **World Conference on Education for All**, both of which produced mutually supportive sets of goals upon which the **World Summit for Social Development** and the **Fourth World Conference on Women** can build.

The **World Summit for Social Development** presents the international community with a unique opportunity to reformulate the concept of development in terms of the dignity of the individual and the welfare of a human community that encompasses generations yet unborn.

The Social Summit expects to see world leaders reach agreement on a wide spectrum of principles and commitments to create an environment more conducive to social development, including the promotion of economic policies that serve the needs of the people.

There is agreement that social development is inseparable from the economic, political, ecological and cultural environment in which it takes place. It cannot be pursued as a sectoral initiative. In fact, the special importance of the Summit's proposed programme of action lies in its integrated approach, its attempt to combine poverty eradication, employment creation and social integration into coordinated national and international strategies.

Coordination is essential. Policies to eradicate poverty and reduce disparities require

the creation of employment opportunities, and would be incomplete and ineffective without measures to eliminate discrimination and promote harmonious social relationships among groups and nations.

The well-being of people engaged in gainful employment also requires the exercise of freedom and basic human rights, the provision of good education and other basic public services, and the development of convivial relations within communities.

Likewise, social integration, or the capacity of people to live together in full respect for the dignity of each individual and the common good, encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies. It calls for a sound economic environment as well as for cultures based on freedom and responsibility.

As the concept of peace has expanded from territiorial security to human security, our understanding of development is moving from what Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali has termed "[a transfer of] funds and expertise from the haves to the have-nots" towards "a culture of development in which every major dimension of life is considered an aspect of development". [17]

NOTES

1. *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1947-1948*, New York, 1949, pp. 607-619.
2. *Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation with Special Reference to Standards of Living*, E/CN.5/267, 25 April 1952
3. John McKay, "The Development Model", *Development: the Journal of the Society for International Development*, 1990:3/4, pp. 55-58.
4. General Assembly, sixteenth session, provisional verbatims.
5. John McKay, Op. cit.
6. *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1961*, New York, 1962, pp. 230-237.
7. See the *Yearbook of the United Nations* for accounts of the early development work of the United Nations, as well as the declarations and programmes of acxtion of the United Nations world confer ences to which this chapter refers, including summaries of the debates that preceded their adoption. See also basic reference works as *Everyone's United Nations* and *Basic Facts about the United Nations*.
8. Such thinkers ranged from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to Marshall McLuhan.
9. General Assembly resolution 3201 (S-VI)
10. "Change: Social Conflict or Harmony?: Results of a Stockholm Roundtable", Summary of a conference sponsored by the Swedish Government and UNDP, July 1994, pp. 6-7.
11. General Assembly resolution
12. Mahbub ul Haq, "Human Security in an Uncertain World", at the launch of the *Human Development Report 1994* in Copenhagen, a policy paper commissioned by UNDP for the World Summit for Social Development, July 1994, p. 6.
13. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Development*, A/48/935, 6 May 1994, para. 5.
14. "Foreign Aid: The Kindness of Strangers", *The Economist*, May 7,1994, p.19.
15. *Human Development Report 1994*, p. 15.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
17. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Op. cit., para. 231.

THE UN SYSTEM AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
THE KEY PLAYERS

International Labour Organization (ILO) –
leads the UN system on labour and employment issues; works to create jobs, improve working conditions and protect workers' rights.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) –
works to end hunger everywhere through improving food production and distribution.

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) –
leads the UN system in enhancing education; works to eliminate illiteracy worldwide and to spread basic and lifelong education in and out of school.

World Health Organization (WHO) –
carries out primary health care work worldwide; leads a global effort to immunize all children against major child killers; works to eradicate the major infectious diseases and coordinates a global programme on AIDS.

World Bank –
makes loans for major development projects, from irrigation systems to primary health and education networks; also helps Governments revitalize economies through programmes that boost private enterprise without damaging social development.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) –
assists Governments towards free-market systems and helps them design social safety nets to shield vulnerable groups from economic shocks.

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) –
helps the rural poor worldwide through raising food production, improving food distribution and creating rural employment.

UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) –
provides models and tools to improve housing, urban planning and rural development worldwide.

UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) –
promotes trade and economic growth and fosters programmes to alleviate poverty.

UN Development Programme (UNDP) –
coordinates technical assistance in all fields and plays a lead role in rethinking development.

UN Environment Programme (UNEP) –
launches grass-roots pilot projects to rehabilitate local environments.

UN Population Fund (UNFPA) –
charts major demographic trends and helps Governments develop family-planning programmes.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) –
works to repatriate and resettle refugees and internally displaced persons, providing for their health, nutrition, education and training until they can return to normal life.

UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) –
promotes children's rights; works in close conjunction with WHO, FAO and UNESCO to improve nutrition, health and sanitation, literacy and basic education for children and mothers.

UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) –
supports experimental projects to benefit women and bring them into mainstream development activities.

World Food Programme (WFP) –
uses food aid to meet relief needs and to support basic development projects such as the construction of roads and sanitation systems.

two

Conquering Poverty: Old Enemy — New Strategies

Poverty and social exclusion constitute a violation of human dignity ...
— The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights

Absolute poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy are the lot of one-fifth of the world's population. There can be no more urgent task for development than to attack the causes and symptoms of these ills.
— Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali [1]

The world's most impoverished people lack much more than a decent income. They are usually malnourished, easy prey for disease, badly housed, barely literate and, more often than not, powerless to change their situation.

- **The United Nations estimates that 1.3 billion people — one of every five on Earth — live in debilitating poverty.**
- **Some 550 million go to bed hungry each night. A billion and a half people lack safe water or sanitation.**
- **The World Bank estimates that more than a billion people around the world struggle to survive on less than a dollar a day.**

The fact that extreme poverty persists throughout the world despite the enormous generation of wealth over the past fifty years is one of the central reasons that development policies are under particular scrutiny.

Poverty has different faces. It can exist as endemic mass poverty in poor countries, pockets of poverty amidst wealth in rich countries, sudden poverty resulting from disasters and conflicts, temporary poverty from loss of employment or the marginal poverty of those performing menial but essential work for inadequate wages. Whether the spread of poverty is part of a longer-term global trend is a matter of debate among experts. But there is no doubt that poverty is increasing in areas of both the industrialized and developing worlds — and that it has differing effects on men and on children and women.

Discrimination exacerbates the suffering of women trapped in poverty and is one key to their disproportionate numbers among the absolute poor. They are usually paid less than men; often they do not have the legal right to own land. They are commonly denied access to credit and productive resources like fertilizer and labour-saving tools, as well as to health services and training.

The poorest of the poor fall far below most national poverty lines. A majority — some estimates have ranged as high as 70 per cent — are female. And their numbers are growing.

Two decades ago, Robert S. McNamara, then president of the World Bank, defined absolute poverty as "a condition of life so limited by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality, and low life expectancy as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency". [2]

When Mr. McNamara first offered his definition in 1972, there were 700 million people living in absolute poverty. Now there are nearly twice as many.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali aptly explains why global poverty must be not only reduced but ultimately eliminated. Whatever the disagreements about its causes, he said, **"poverty is universally recognized as morally repugnant, economically destructive and politically dangerous".** [3]

The United Nations regards poverty not as a marginal phenomenon that charity or development assistance can eliminate, but as a systemic dysfunction of societies and economies. It is a grim reminder that the ingredients of a healthy and fulfilling life are simply out of reach for growing numbers of the world's people.

POVERTY MEANS INSTABILITY

The lives of many poor people are becoming harder, even as improvements in global communications ensure that they become ever more aware of the prosperity from which they have been excluded. Often the result is instability and violence.

"Poverty, want and disaffection", says James Grant, Executive Director of the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF), "too often find expression at the point of a gun." [4]

Poverty is a central component of a complex political, economic and social crisis, whose consequences are regularly dramatized in wrenching scenes of carnage, hunger and disease.

Although poverty is widespread in both cities and the countryside, the largest number of poor people live in the neglected rural areas of developing countries, principally in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. But growing numbers of the rural poor continue to migrate to urban areas in all regions.

The globalization of poverty reflects underdevelopment, mounting population pressures, relentless degradation of the environment, intolerance and injustice — all of which are being addressed by the ongoing cycle of United Nations conferences during the first half of this decade.

Member States of the United Nations are acutely aware that the peoples of the world will be unable to live in peace and harmony — either with themselves or the physical environment — while so many human beings live in poverty.

"Unless the problem of poverty is solved, it will be difficult for people to actively par-

ticipate in development in any meaningful way under conditions of freedom and democracy, or to equitably share in the benefits gained," said Yang Yanyi, China's representative at a discussion of poverty at the 48th session of the General Assembly. [5]

This is one of the concerns that prompted the United Nations General Assembly to declare the eradication of poverty, particularly in the developing countries, "one of the priority development objectives of the 1990s". It is why poverty and the mutually reinforcing problems of unemployment and social disintegration have been placed at the heart of the agenda for the 1995 World Summit for Social Development.

Unless new strategies for development are found — tantamount to what the Secretary-General has called "a new vision of development" — poverty seems certain to intensify, along with its dangers.

> "Poverty is the greatest threat to political stability, social cohesion and the environmental health of the planet ... Strategies for poverty reduction will certainly embrace all aspects of national policy." [6]
>
> **— Human Development Report 1994**

WHO PAYS? SOME INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS

Some insist that shortage of money is not the key issue; that reallocation, efficiency and clear priorities are more important. Others see the need for new resources for development purposes as inevitable and have proposed innovative and controversial methods to raise funds. Some recent proposals include:

- The Tobin tax (suggested by James Tobin, winner of the 1981 Nobel Prize for Economics) on speculative international financial transactions (foreign exchange movements). A tax of 0.05 per cent on the value of each transaction could raise around $150 billion a year and discourage this non-productive activity.
- Modest fees could be charged on other global transactions - e.g. the use of satellite time and international air transport. Taxes could be put on the sale of arms and on the consumption of non-renewable energy - e.g. $1 per barrel of oil and its equivalent in coal consumption could annually generate more than $60 billion.
- Demilitarization funds, also known as the "peace dividend" - to be created from the cuts in military spending wherein a clear link is developed between reduced arms spending and increased social spending. If the decline in world military spending continues at the present rate of 3 per cent per annum, it would yield a global cumulative peace dividend of $460 billion by the year 2000. (See Chapter II.)
- Pollution permits, that would entitle holders to emit a certain quantity of pollutants, could be made tradable globally. Issued by an international authority, these could be leased for a certain time period, with the proceeds being used for environmental projects. Countries that did not use their full quota (mostly in developing regions) could sell their surplus to others. This could raise significant North-South financial flows and provide funds for development.
- User fees for exploitation of the global commons heritage such as under-the-sea wealth.
- Re-issue Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) earmarked for social development.
- The 20:20 compact on human development proposed by UNDP - whereby 20 per cent of developing country budgets and 20 per cent of industrial-country aid are allocated to human priority expenditure. (See Chapter II.)
- Combatting corruption, particularly in government and among bureaucracy of a country could ensure that a country's valuable resources are put to development use.
- Restructuring debt payments - as debt repayments take a large share of the budgets of developing countries, debt swap arrangements could be set up for the poorest countries, under which debt payments could be converted into investments for human capital formation.

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE POOR

Global poverty has risen as a direct result of the global economic recession and debt crisis that has crippled many developing countries since the 1980s. **Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)**, while intended to restore economic health and productivity in developing countries, have also created hardships for the poorer sectors of society. Governments have been required to slash their social-sector spending, including reductions in subsidies for food and other essential items, as well as civil-service job cuts.

- **In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, education outlays were cut by 25 per cent or more in the 1980s.**
- **Female school enrolment fell by as much as 50 per cent in many areas of Africa.** [7]
- **Some 100 million children, some two thirds of whom are girls, have no schools to attend, even for primary education.**
- **A billion adults are illiterate, the majority of them women.**
- **Health budgets have also suffered. Among the poorest countries, 37 halved their spending on health needs despite steep rises in malnutrition, low birth-weight babies and the spread of disease.**
- **The cost of essential medicines soared to prohibitive heights while health facilities closed throughout the developing world.**

The human toll has been staggering — but little noticed.

> "Most of the Third World's suffering remains invisible", said Mr. Grant of UNICEF. "Of the 35,000 children under age five who die every day in the developing countries, more than 32,000 succumb to largely preventable hunger and illness. No earthquake, no flood, no war has taken the lives of a quarter-million children in a single week; but that is the weekly death toll of the invisible emergencies resulting from poverty and underdevelopment." [8]

In developing countries, the major causes of death are infectious and parasitic diseases, which kill 17 million people a year, including:

- **6.5 million from acute respiratory infections;**
- **4.5 million from diarrhoeal illnesses;**
- **3.5 million from tuberculosis.**

Most of these deaths stem from poor nutrition and unsafe environments — particularly pol-

luted water, which contributes to nearly a billion cases of diarrhoea each year. [9]

Mosquito-borne malaria still has a devastating hold on impoverished areas. The malarial parasite's increased resistance to available drugs could lead to a doubling of malaria deaths, to nearly two million a year within a decade, according to the **World Bank's 1993 World Development Report.**

The World Bank, which designed these SAPs with the International Monetary Fund, has recognized the need to improve these policies and to ensure that the burdens of adjustment are equitably shared, while arguing that sound economic policies are a necessary prerequisite for sustained economic recovery.

"Clearly, given the magnitude of the problem, there is a long — a very long — way to go", said Lewis T. Preston, the World Bank President. But, he added, "If we're not helping to reduce poverty, we're not doing our job." [10]

UNICEF was one of the first voices raised against the harsh effects of SAPs, especially in health and education. It argued for a new approach — dubbed "structural adjustment with a human face" — designed to protect the poor, particularly children and women. Subsequently, the IMF and the World Bank have joined UNICEF and other UN agencies in promoting social safety nets to offset the negative impacts of SAPs.

RURAL POVERTY

The poorest of the poor in the world live mostly in rural areas. **This is due in part to lopsided development policies of the past few decades that have allocated most resources to urban-industrial development, resulting in the neglect of rural areas.**

The extremes of rural poverty are revealed in horrifying images of starvation. **Most economists and planners today understand that famine is not caused by crop failures or a shortage of cultivable land or water, but is the direct result of poverty** (the inability to buy available food), social inequity and poor policies and planning on the part of Governments.

For example, in their attempts to raise foreign currency, many developing countries pressed their farmers to shift from food production to the cultivation of cash crops for export, despite the vulnerability of such products to international commodity fluctuations. As a result, many rural communities moved from food self-sufficiency to acute, often disastrous food deficits.

SUPPORT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Several UN organizations are today trying to improve the quality of life and agricultural production in rural areas.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) advises Governments on agricultural policy and planning. In collaboration with the **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** and the **World Food Programme**, it has launched major efforts to improve food production and distribution systems, as well as to provide technical assistance to subsistence farmers, many of whom are women cultivating small family holdings.

- **FAO is convinced that "many countries of the South, including in Africa, have**

the potential to raise their agricultural production and, in doing so, to contribute to poverty alleviation (through job creation), as well as to raising food production. But there is no magic wand to make this come about. Complex economic, social and biophysical factors will have to be combined." [11]

- **FAO and IFAD are therefore encouraging Governments to undertake such efforts as land reform and to strengthen health, education and other social services in rural areas, so as to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth.**

Besides increasing the access of the poor to credit facilities, the UN and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) encourage rural non-farm production activities, including agro-processing, sales and services of agricultural equipment and inputs, and other cottage enterprises.

Eventually, economic policies that support rural development will not just help reduce rural poverty, but also slow migration to cities and thus reduce the strains on urban resources and social structures.

MEASURING POVERTY

Until recently, economists tended to measure global poverty exclusively in terms of the per capita income or expenditure level that could sustain a minimum standard of living. But over time it became apparent that income alone was an inadequate yardstick to assess the living conditions of people who were not part of a money economy.

Poverty is now considered not only in terms of money and consumption, but in relation to health, life expectancy, access to clean water, nutrition, school-enrolment rates, child mortality, and other indicators of social welfare.

- **In 1990, a basic income yardstick used by the World Bank to estimate global poverty set an upper poverty line of US$370 (in 1985 purchasing power parity dollars) per capita for absolute poverty.**

- **The Bank also used a lower poverty line, of US$275 per capita. People whose consumption levels fall below that level are classified as extremely poor. When discussing poverty within countries, the Report used country-specific poverty lines. [12]**

INCREASING POVERTY AMONG THE RICH

The UN and world leaders are increasingly aware that poverty is a problem that affects all societies, heeding no boundaries. Although the vast majority of the poor live in developing countries, the number of poor people has increased in recent years not only in the former Communist countries of Europe, but in a number of prosperous industrialized nations, notably the United States and many nations of Western Europe.

- **Nearly 15 per cent of the people in the United States and the European Union live below national poverty lines, according to statistics compiled by the 1994 Human Development Report. [13]**

- **UNICEF reported in 1993 that child poverty nearly doubled in the United States and the United Kingdom over the last decade.**

- **In the US today, UNICEF reported, nearly one child in five is poor, the highest level of child poverty in 25 years in the world's richest country.**

The terrible irony of global poverty and its causes is best appreciated in the context of global prosperity. In the 50 years since the founding of the United Nations, the same world that has produced widespread poverty has also generated substantial improvements in material well-being for the vast majority of the world's 5.6 billion people.

- **Global GDP has increased sevenfold, to $22 trillion; trade has grown even more.**

- **Real per capita income has more than tripled.**

- **Life expectancy has risen in most countries, and average infant mortality has been reduced in the developing world.**

- **There have been gains in literacy and primary education.**

- **Pluralistic and democratic institutions have grown and flourished.**

Even during the so-called "lost development decade" of the 1980s, when economies faltered and development assistance languished, social and economic conditions grew progressively better for most people.

> "The incomes of most of the world's poor went on rising, and under-five mortality, primary-school enrolment ratios and other key social indicators continued to improve", the World Bank reported in 1993. [14]

Yet, on balance, the distribution of these benefits has remained highly unequal. The gulf between rich and poor has widened dramatically, while the overall population of poor people continues to swell. **Twenty per cent of humanity now receives 83 per cent of all income, while the poorest 20 per cent have barely 1.5 per cent.**

> "Never have so few nations — and so few people inside them — had so much power and richness", said Herbert ("Betinho") DeSouza, director of the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis and a leader of Brazil's anti-hunger campaign. [15]

These disparities manifest themselves most glaringly in patterns of consumption and production in the northern industrialized countries.

- **The North, with a fifth of the world's population, has four-fifths of its income, while consuming 70 per cent of the world's energy, 85 per cent of its wood and 75 per cent of its metals.**

"Such inequalities," the **World Commission on Environment and Development** concluded in 1987, "represent great differences not merely in the quality of life today, but also in the capacity of societies to improve their quality of life in the future." [16]

There is a growing view that the globalization of prosperity is also a driving force behind the persistence of poverty.

> "While globalization has created new opportunities for enrichment for some areas and and some sections of society, it has had harsh effects on, or completely left out, many others", Frances Stewart, director of Oxford University's Institute of Commonwealth Studies, told the World Hearings on Development in June 1994. "Global and market forces destroy rather than create safety nets for those who are marginalized." [17]

THE POPULATION FACTOR

The combined effects of population growth and poverty constitute the single greatest challenge to development efforts, a fact acknowledged by Governments at the **International Conference on Population and Development** held from 5 to 13 September 1994 in Cairo, Egypt.

Although the rate of worldwide population growth is the lowest recorded since the Second World War, the global population is still increasing by 88 million people a year, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) — the vast majority of whom are born in the countries least able to support their full development.

Thanks in large part to the efforts of the Fund, there has been striking progress in helping Governments and their citizens formulate effective population policies and programmes, and expand access to voluntary family-planning services.

UNFPA-backed programmes are a major factor in significant declines in birth rates in most developing countries. The effect has been not only to ease the strain on public services that are already thinly stretched, but to give families generally — and women in particular — greater control over their lives.

The Population Conference agreed that population policies should be implemented in ways that are consistent with agreed-upon development strategies to help the poor. These strategies include the **International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade; the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s; the 1992 Agenda 21 formulated by the UN Conference on Environment and Development; the outcome of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations; and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.**

The Cairo Population Conference came at a critical point, between the 1992 United

Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro; the World Summit for Social Development, 6-12 March 1995 in Copenhagen, Denmark; and the September 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

Taken together, these meetings promise to set a new global agenda for socially equitable and environmentally sustainable human development into the twenty-first century.

> "The United Nations is not just about blue helmets and peace-keeping, but development and the welfare of peoples", said Ambassador Richard Butler of Australia, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, a key coordinating body in development efforts. [18]

EMERGING MODELS OF DEVELOPMENT

Understanding the nature of extreme poverty and its causes is an essential first step towards achieving social progress for all peoples, the **World Conference on Human Rights** declared in 1993. The human rights of the poorest must be part of every community's agenda, States at that Conference declared, and the poor must be involved in the decision-making process of their own communities. [19]

Mr. Speth, Administrator of the **United Nations Development Programme** has described the ideal model of development as one **"that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably; that regenerates the environment rather than destroying it; that empowers people rather than marginalizing them."**

This model, he said, would offer "development that gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities, and providing for their participation in decisions that affect their lives. It is development that is pro-people, pro-nature, pro-jobs, and pro-women." [20]

Others are equally certain of what development should **not** be. It can't be rapid economic growth alone. As Pranab Bardhan, professor of economics at the University of California at Berkeley, says in a paper entitled "Poverty Alleviation":

> "... not all kinds of economic growth reduce poverty, nor is growth by itself enough to remove poverty at a sufficiently rapid pace in most countries. For example, large-scale capital-intensive, energy-intensive, and environment-damaging projects of industrialization and commercialization may not help the poor and often may uproot and disenfranchise sections of the poor from their traditional habitats and access to resources." [21]

EMPOWERMENT AS A KEY

Central to any global anti-poverty campaign, many believe, are strategies to enable the poor to remove the barriers that entrap them in poverty. By definition, this includes empowering women.

"It needs to be recognized that development policies designed to ensure equity and full participation in society should give priority to raising the social and economic status of

women", the South Commission, headed by former President Julius K. Nyerere of Tanzania, said in a 1990 report.

> "For example, **an agricultural strategy that aims at self-reliance as regards food and nutritional security must give prominence to the role of women** as food producers and as providers of health care. An industrial strategy focusing on the cost-efficient provision of consumption goods by using available skills needs to take account of women as major producers and consumers of most essential items of daily life." [22]

Empowering the poor also means reorienting economic growth to make the needs of people paramount.

"The poor do not need charity", said Mahbub ul Haq, Special Adviser to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. "The need is an opportunity to compete in the markets, on an equal footing." [23]

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CREDIT

On a smaller scale, one innovation in enabling the poor to pull themselves out of poverty has been the creation of grassroots financial institutions to lend small amounts of money to people who have historically been denied access to credit.

The **Grameen Bank of Bangladesh**, a non-governmental organization that has extended thousands of loans to poor people since its founding in 1976, is one of the first such institutions. Ninety-two per cent of its customers are poor women who have used the money to increase food production and launch micro-businesses of their own.

The Grameen repayment rate of 97 per cent and higher is comparable to other "village banks", such as the **First Person Fund in Canada**, which serves Indian reservations in Ontario; the **Badan Kredit Kecamertan**, which offers loans to people in Indonesia, and the **Foundation for International Assistance** in Latin America.

Although it is unlikely that such organizations will ever replace Governments and commercial banks as major sources of credit, they have demonstrated that impoverished people are good credit risks if given the opportunity. Many are also resourceful entrepreneurs who needed start-up capital of only $50 to $100 to buy such necessities as a hand loom or a lease on a market stall.

THE "20-20" PROPOSAL

Human Development Report 1994 has proposed that the United Nations be given a mandate to "to draw up a comprehensive blueprint for ensuring human security and protecting people from threats in their daily lives — poverty, unemployment, drugs, terrorism, environmental degradation and social disintegration".

The idea, which has been mired in controversy ever since it was proposed, includes a ten-year "human development compact", under which developing nations and donor nations would each pledge to ensure basic human development levels for all their people.

This would entail commitments to what has been called **the 20:20 Plan, under which**

donor Governments would earmark a minimum of 20 per cent of their development assistance and developing countries would channel a minimum of 20 per cent of their national budgets for defined human-priority concerns over the next 10 years.

UNDP, joined by UNICEF and UNFPA, are campaigning to promote 20:20, which Mr. Grant of UNICEF said would create "a funding mechanism for basic social services".

Proponents estimate that the plan could provide roughly $30 billion to $40 billion a year over a decade for a range of human development concerns in all countries, including:

- **Universal primary education, for girls as well as boys;**
- **Cutting adult illiteracy rates by half;**
- **Eliminating severe malnutrition;**
- **Providing family-planning services for all willing couples;**
- **Safe drinking water and sanitation for all;**
- **Making credit available to all to help generate self-employment opportunities.**

At present, public spending on social services ranges from 33 per cent in Sweden to less than one per cent in Rwanda.

Some developing countries, however, have expressed concern that an international commitment to earmark 20 per cent of national budgets and international assistance for specified purposes would be a restrictive and unproductive condition imposed on the development strategies of developing countries.

THE PEACE DIVIDEND

It has also been widely proposed that nations agree to strive to reduce global military expenditures by three per cent a year between 1995 and 2005 and use some of the unspent money - perhaps 20 per cent from the industrial nations and 10 per cent from the developing countries - for a "**global human security fund**".

But the "**peace dividend**" expected from the post-cold-war period has not matched people's expectations.

Additional funds for development might be raised, says the **Human Development Report**, through a global taxation system — especially one that would target world pollution and speculative movements of capital from one country to another. (See box, **Who Pays?**, on new sources of funding.)

NEW STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING POVERTY

The World Summit for Social Development provides a major opportunity for world leaders to refocus attention on urgent priorities of social development.

Reducing poverty, let alone eliminating it, calls for numerous actions involving a wide spectrum of actors — from village and neighbourhood self-help groups to national min-

istries, international research institutes and intergovernmental organizations. The process will involve many steps, such as:

- **Defining poverty reduction as a central element of both social and economic development;**
- **Widening the choices available to poor people by giving them access to basic education and health services, as well as training and credit;**
- **Tracking the effectiveness of anti-poverty programmes;**
- **Mobilizing all the actors of the development process, starting with the community organizations of poor people;**
- **Recognizing that poverty affects women and men differently and ensuring equity for women in the development process, starting with their health and nutrition needs in infancy;**
- **Formulating time-bound, multisectoral programmes for poverty reduction, both national and international;**
- **Improving the conditions of the landless poor through land distribution and improved access to credit, technology, markets and extension services;**
- **Increasing agricultural research, particularly for enhancing the productivity of poor farmers.**

The World Summit for Social Development provides a major opportunity for world leaders to refocus attention on poverty and its appalling costs, both social and economic, and to ensure that it remains an overriding concern on the world agenda.

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Facing the Job Dilemma

Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
— Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 23)

The global dimensions of today's employment crisis strain the imagination.

- **Each year, over 43 million job seekers enter the workforce.**
- **Of a world labour force of 2.8 billion people, 30 per cent are unemployed or underemployed.**
- **120 million people are looking for work but cannot find it.**
- **700 million are underemployed, toiling long hours for earnings that fall short of the minimum required to obtain necessities other than food.** [1]

The worldwide job shortage is a major contributor to today's social problems: the disintegration of families and the fragmentation of communities caused by migration to seek work; crime; the stress symptoms of the loss of work and prolonged unemployment, including drug abuse and family violence; and above all, the continued cycle of poverty with all its ills, social as well as economic.

At the founding of the United Nations in 1945, the US Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius, acutely aware of the roots of the Second World War in the Great Depression of the 1930s, wrote to his Government:

> "The battle for peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the world of an enduring peace ...No provisions that can be written into the Charter will enable the Security Council to make the world secure from war if men and women have no security in their homes and their jobs." [2]

To ensure work for today's unemployed, as well as newcomers to the workforce — especially women and young people — **the world must generate one billion new jobs over the next decade.** During the next century, this number will undoubtedly increase as those born during the last decades of high population growth seek livelihoods.[3]

WORK AS EMPOWERMENT

Every society organizes a variety of forms of work in order to meet the individual and collective needs of its citizens. This work translates into jobs, into employment, hopefully "productive" employment. Productive employment, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), is work that contributes to national aggregate wealth and also generates sufficient wealth for the individual to realize his or her well-being, both material and spiritual.

Productive work empowers people not just economically — allowing them participation in the market through purchasing power — but socially, by the enhancement of their dignity and self-esteem. As the 1993 **Human Development Report** points out, "... it can empower them politically if they begin to influence decisions in the workplace and beyond." [4]

We seem to have entered a period of **"jobless growth"** in many industrialized societies in which technological advances increase output and wealth without generating commensurate employment. While a few benefit from this process, an ever-increasing number are penalized with unemployment, insecurity and fear, lower rates of pay and a mounting sense of deprivation.[5]

Unemployment, due to an insufficient number of jobs, and underemployment, in work with low productivity, are fundamental concerns in both developing and industrialized societies. Employment is the nexus at which social and economic development meet. Creating productive employment is therefore one of the core issues of the **World Summit for Social Development;** in and of itself, it reduces poverty and fosters social integration, the two other central Social Summit themes.

A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

At the recent UNDP Round-Table on Global Change, held in Stockholm in July 1994, the ILO contribution, **The Employment Challenge**, revealed the following regional overview of work in the 1990s:

In the **industrialized countries**, average unemployment is expected to reach 8.6 per cent in 1994: 12 per cent in Western Europe and 15 per cent in Eastern European countries in transition. The number of jobs is growing at a far slower pace than output. Even where unemployment has begun to decline, as it has in the United States, the new jobs require fewer skills and pay less than those that disappeared during the last recession. In addition, many are only temporary.

By 1994, in the developed world, more than 35 million people, many of them women, were seeking work. Youth unemployment in 1992 had reached 14 per cent in the industrialized nations, 18 per cent in Western Europe.

Eastern Europe's passage from central planning to market systems has eliminated many jobs, which have not yet been replaced by others. Moreover, subsidies that were intended to ease this transition have entailed massive government spending. In some cases,

this has triggered very high inflation, which has made the new poor even poorer.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, the stringent structural adjustment programmes undertaken during the 1980s have so far failed to generate the anticipated increase in employment. Urban unemployment has again climbed to its 1980 level of 7 per cent. Cutbacks in the public sector have compounded other underlying factors such as the continuous growth of the working-age population, migration from rural areas to cities and the rising participation of women in the workforce. New work opportunities are confined largely to the informal sector — "unregulated and uncounted" — which, nonetheless, provides jobs for 30 per cent of the region's population.

In the **Middle East and North Africa**, unemployment ranges between 10 and 20 per cent, the consequence of both population growth and the sharp drop in oil revenues. The people hardest hit are young job-seekers — many of them graduates of the region's vastly expanded university system — particularly because Governments can no longer afford to act as the employer of last resort. The result has been social instability that has kept Governments from undertaking much-needed reforms.

In **sub-Saharan Africa**, structural adjustment policies so far have not produced the economic turnaround they promised. While accurate statistics are difficult to come by, the urban unemployment rate after two decades of economic crisis is estimated at 20 per cent. Moreover, some two thirds of urban jobs are in the vulnerable informal sector. In addition, according to the ILO, more than half of all non-farm employees work for Governments, which clearly cannot afford to hire more or to raise the real wages of those whom they do employ.

South Asia must create jobs rapidly because of the unprecedented numbers of young people joining the labour force. Governments of the region are seeking to increase productive employment in the rural areas. Land reform is one tool for this process, because it encourages farmers to develop holdings that they can consider their own. This not only keeps people on the land in labour-intensive cultivation, but increases the output of traditional crops and encourages the planting of new ones. Both these developments generate jobs in processing and marketing the harvests.

In **China**, whose sheer size renders it virtually a region, the ILO estimates that rapid economic liberalization has led to astonishing — and probably unsustainable — rates of growth, as well as a rapid decline in poverty. Vast movements of peasants from the countryside to the coastal cities in search of work have promoted growth, but may become a problem if the economy goes into recession.

East and South-East Asia have also experienced both rapid growth and high rates of employment. Governments have borrowed prudently, kept the State sector small, favoured private employers, promoted exports by manipulated exchange rates and protected food producers. As the wave of economic growth sweeps through this region, however, the **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific** has pointed out, with concern, there is a serious "social lag" — the failure of social and political change to keep pace with the dramatic economic transformations — that threatens overall stability.

PRECARIOUS WORK

All in all, there has been a global shift towards more "precarious" employment, whether in temporary service jobs or in work in the informal sector, much of which is service-oriented.

Many attribute this development to the disappearance of manufacturing jobs. According to the 1993 **Human Development Report:**

> "The notion that manufacturing is the foundation for all other economic activity is an old illusion. The distinction between industry and services is now largely meaningless. In industrial countries today, over half the workers in a typical manufacturing firm do service jobs — design, distribution, financial planning; only a minority make things on the factory floor...services are also the fastest-growing part of international trade, accounting for 20 per cent of total world trade. Services account for 40 per cent of the stock of foreign direct investment by the five big industrial economies." [6]

Moreover, since most developing countries remain net importers of services, the expansion of trade in skill-intensive services offers them considerable opportunities to generate jobs in this increasingly lucrative sector — if they can train their citizens adequately. [7]

But until such time as the service sector can provide employment that is less precarious and developing countries can, at the very least, meet their people's service needs, the only option for many is self-employment.

INSECURE INCOMES

The shift to more precarious work has been accompanied by increasing insecurity of incomes.

- **Nominal wages have remained stagnant or risen only very slowly, but inflation has sharply eroded their purchasing power.**

- **As a result, real wages in many parts of the world have declined. In the United States, real earnings fell by 3 per cent during the 1980s. In Latin America during the same period, they fell by 20 per cent, and by far more in many African countries.**

- **Budgetary problems in industrialized countries have unravelled social safety nets. In the United States between 1987 and 1990, the real benefits per pensioner declined by 40 per cent; in Austria by 50 per cent. In Germany, unemployment and welfare payments will be cut substantially over the next three years.**

The result of such trends will be not only increasing poverty, but more and more jobless people.

Jan Pronk, the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, forsees a transformation of developed countries in which "the labour market will consist of insiders and outsiders and a vicious circle will come into being: higher unemployment leads to a greater need for welfare provisions, leading to higher social premiums, leading to higher labour costs and in turn again to higher unemployment." [8]

During the past five decades, though world income has increased sevenfold (in real GDP) and income per person more than tripled (in per capita GNP), these gains have been spread very unevenly, both nationally and on a global scale. And inequality is rising.

THE TRANSNATIONAL FACTOR

World employment is increasingly related to the globalization of markets — for goods, services, capital, labour, technology and information — and the astounding rise of transnational corporations (TNCs) since the Second World War.

TNCs are major players in any discussion of productive employment. They now number some 37,000 parent firms, most based in the North, which control more than 200,000 foreign affiliates. [9] They also control almost three quarters of all world trade in commodities, manufactured goods and services. [10]

In developing countries alone, TNC employment rose from 7 million in 1985 to an estimated 12 million in 1992. While this number is expected to continue increasing in the years to come, the growth of TNCs in the third world has negative as well as positive implications for employment:

- **They tend not to take on economic risks with small suppliers and nascent enterprises in developing countries and thus may hinder the expansion of these firms and their capacity to create jobs.**

- **Roughly one third of TNC trade is conducted among their own affiliates – and is by and large exempt from government regulation of any kind, including conditions of employment, among other social responsibilities. [11]**

THE NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE

One fifth of humankind, mostly in the industrialized countries, now has well over four fifths of global income.

- **Between 1960 and 1991, the share of world income for the richest 20 per cent of the global population rose from 70 to 85 per cent.**

- **Over the same period, all but the richest 20 per cent saw their share of world income fall.**

- **The meagre share of the poorest 20 per cent declined from 2.3 per cent to 1.4 per cent.**

This gap inevitably encourages migration from poor countries to rich ones.

- **At least 35 million people from the South have taken up residence in the North during the past three decades, and some one million more join them each year.**

- **An additional million are estimated to be working overseas on contracts for fixed periods.**

- **The number of illegal international migrants is estimated to be between 15 million and 30 million.**

Pressures are likely to increase. **Expanding populations, unemployment, restricted international markets and environmental degradation will force millions more to leave their native lands.** But the rich countries are closing their doors because they themselves face stagnating economies, high unemployment and the prospect of jobless growth. [12]

SHORT-SIGHTED POLICIES

Short-sighted economic and social policies have created many of these problems. According to the ILO, Governments almost everywhere at all stages of development have retrenched, adopting since the mid-1980s policies geared to stability rather than dynamism.[13]

The **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** takes an even stronger stand: that the current economic orthodoxy, which sees inflation as a greater threat than unemployment and values government surpluses over deficit spending, is failing to stimulate demand. "... global demand deficiency is a recipe for waste, unemployment, depressed commodity prices, and conflict among nations." [14]

Ironically, the very policies designed to avert inflation — and thus foster economic stability — have led to many of the symptoms of social breakdown that the international community views with increasing alarm. **One of the greatest threats is the rising number of young people who see no future for themselves except on the fringes of society — or against it.**

Policies geared largely to preventing or checking inflation have another ominous side effect: **the increased exploitation of children, 100 to 200 million of whom toil virtually as slaves in private homes and illegal enterprises at the edge of the informal sector,** unprotected because unseen. [15]

In the United States alone, violations of statutes on child labour increased by 250 per cent between 1980 and 1990. The economic crises of the Central and East European countries in transition have propelled thousands of children into the streets, ready to work in the growing sex trade or for other criminal organizations. [16]

RETOOLING EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

In his **Agenda for Development**, the Secretary-General argues that no single blueprint is enough to cure unemployment or expand productive employment. "Labour market measures, training and retraining programmes, targeted employment-creation schemes and macroeconomic policy can all affect employment levels," he says.

The ILO believes that the East Asian nations that avoided stagnation and unemployment during the last decade did so because their domestic policies supported clearly targeted goals. "Where the unemployment crisis exists, it has been created not by chance but by error; by incentives that distort and institutions that are inadequate... National policies have often been mistakenly devised to promote capital investment, when labour-intensive production was what the country needed." [17]

A key element in these countries' relative success has been the development of **"enabling environments", based on sound fiscal policies, an equitable legal framework and an adequate system of incentives for private investment, in which the private sector could flourish** and, in doing so, create new jobs.

To create what the 1993 **Human Development Report** terms **"people-friendly markets"**,

many more preconditions, most of them in the social sector, are needed. The Report lists among them:

- **Adequate investment in the education, health and skills of people to prepare them for the market;**
- **An equitable distribution of assets, particularly land in poor agrarian societies;**
- **Extension of credit to the poor;**
- **Access to information, particularly about the range of market opportunities;**
- **Adequate physical infrastructure, especially roads, electricity and telecommunications, and adequate support for research and development;**
- **A legal framework to protect property rights;**
- **No barrier to entry, irrespective of race, religion, sex or ethnic origin;**
- **A liberal trade regime, supported by the dismantling of international trade barriers.**[18]

FOCUS ON WOMEN

More than half the economically active women in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia and a third in northern Africa and the rest of Asia earn a bare, precarious living in the informal sector. **In Africa, relatively few women receive wage payment for the work they perform — though they cultivate as much as 80 per cent of that continent's food.** As Gertrude Mongella, the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, recently observed, rural African women "have kept many of their Governments from falling to hunger riots."[19]

Almost everywhere, especially in East Asia, women earn far less than men. In addition, they are rarely given the child-care facilities they need to compete with men in the labour market on equal terms.

Apart from the moral imperatives of fostering the full participation and equality of women in all spheres of social and economic activity, educating girls and women and giving them equal opportunities in the labour force lowers birth rates and therefore improves the welfare and job opportunities of future generations. [20]

A woman who has had seven or more years of education tends to marry four years later and to have 2.2 fewer children than her counterpart with no schooling. She also tends to invest virtually all her earnings in the health, education and training of all her children, girls as well as boys.[21]

Further, as the 1993 **World Development Report** of the World Bank points out, improving girls' education contributes to environmental conservation and sustainable development. [22]

Summing up the first exchange of views of the Preparatory Committee for the World

Summit on Social Development, its Chairman, Ambassador Juan O. Somavía of Chile, wrote:

> "Within traditional GDP and GNP categories, the whole spectrum of social productivity from the reproduction of human beings in the household to the maintenance of relationships which promote the cohesion of the community are ignored. The devaluing of this work runs parallel to the subordinate status of women, since it is women who do most of this 'caring and sustaining'. To link productivity only with paid employment continues to render invisible the enormous amount of unwaged work that women do that undergirds and subsidizes all other kinds of work."

RETHINKING WORK

Ambassador Somavía's summation reflects a recent intense effort in the academic world as well as the UN system to rethink the nature of jobs and of work itself. This exercise has targeted six areas:

- **Support for the informal sector;**
- **Rural development;**
- **Public works;**
- **Socially useful work;**
- **Reskilling workers;**
- **Work sharing.**

DEVELOPING THE INFORMAL SECTOR

The informal sector is usually defined as business activities that are not officially registered and controlled and that pay no taxes. Its employment is characterized as low-paid, insecure and temporary, although in its more established forms it can provide secure, remunerative and skill-enhancing livelihoods, with linkages, and thereby opportunities, in the formal sector. It now employs roughly 300 million people worldwide. It includes everyone from street vendors to baby sitters to freelance artisans to small workshops. Particularly in cities, it comprises small and micro-enterprises that have demonstrated a significant capacity to accumulate capital and create jobs.

Encouraging the productive and legitimate entrepreneurs in the informal sector calls for:

- **Putting an end to policies and practices that discriminate against the informal sector;**
- **Assistance to its workers (many of whom are women) through easier access to credit, such as the Grameen Bank scheme and other cooperative community-**

based programmes such as those developed by UNDP and other agencies;

- Linking informal sector ventures with businesses in the formal sector.

However, as the ILO has warned, **it is important to distinguish between the kinds of productive, self-help activity supported by the Grameen Bank and underground' enterprises on the fringes of legality, where jobs are at low levels of productivity, subject to inadequate working conditions, barely able to provide for minimum material survival** and often rely on the exploitation of child labour.

Such an approach, however, means limited support for the informal sector. Such worthy considerations present a stark dilemma. "Should the informal sector be allowed to continue its expansion outside the framework of laws and social and economic institutions, as low-cost means of absorbing the labour that cannot be employed elsewhere? Or should greater efforts be made to bring it within the legal and institutional framework of the rest of society, with the possible risk of impairing its capacity to absorb labour?" [23]

RURAL LIVELIHOODS

Sixty per cent of the population of developing countries still lives in rural areas; the vast majority continue to depend primarily on agriculture to eke out meagre livings. Redressing the adverse conditions that they face, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, would stem the tide of migrants to the cities, as well as the mounting numbers of **"environmental refugees"** fleeing desertification of marginal lands. It would also respond to many of the social problems that arise from families fragmented by the search for work.

The rehabilitation of land — whether by afforestation programmes or improved water management — usually is itself labour-intensive, as is the replacement of monocultures with multiple-cropping techniques.

As numerous programmes of **FAO** and the **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** have long demonstrated, newly introduced crops often lead to other employment opportunities, such as the local processing of new foods and fibres and the construction of the roads needed to bring these harvests to market.

Land reform, accompanied by price incentives, has significantly enhanced employment in many parts of Asia. So has the extension of training and credit facilities for farmers the world over, many of them women, who now head one third of rural households. **Enhanced rural income means enhanced purchasing power — and thus the expansion of non-farm rural enterprises, which, in turn, generate additional new jobs.** [24]

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC WORKS

Ever since the ancient Egyptian pharaohs paid peasants in food and beer during the fallow season to build the pyramids, warehouses and roads, Governments have offered employment through public works programmes when private markets have not met the need for jobs.

As the **World Food Programme** has shown in its public works projects in many developing countries, the employment and income-generating effects of well-designed interventions of this kind can be considerable, especially when they create badly needed infrastructure. For this reason, policy makers are trying to devise programmes that reflect the right

blend of government and private-sector involvement in economic and social development.

Good infrastructure attracts foreign investment — as does a healthy and well-educated labour force. Consequently, in addition to large-scale public works, labour-intensive investments in literacy and basic education, preventive health care and housing and clean water programmes, can also promote economic development.

SOCIALLY USEFUL WORK

The concept of "**socially useful work**", outside of the normal market economy has been introduced as a new approach to expanding employment for such purposes as protecting the environment and meeting the needs of such vulnerable groups as children, the disabled and the elderly. The challenge to Governments is reconciling the functioning of the market with the values and motivations that underlie much current volunteer activity.

In the American "Boston City Year" programme, school-leavers devote a year to serving the city on projects relating to environmental protection, community development, at-risk youth and the homeless.

Particularly in the United States, socially useful work has also been linked to the notion of "workfare", the idea that support from the State should involve work-related obligations, including community work.

In Eastern Europe, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland have offered active welfare jobs on a preferential basis to people who have exhausted their right to unemployment benefits. Such work is generally unskilled and involves the maintenance of public places and buildings. But, cautions the ILO, these types of employment generally do little to reintegrate jobless workers into the labour market. [25]

RESKILLING WORKERS

The rising demand for highly skilled workers worldwide has left the unskilled with poor employment prospects and stagnant or declining wages. Policies aimed at smoothing adjustment from declining industries to new ones with growth potential not only enhances the productive capacity of any economy, but helps defuse the many social dangers created by unemployment.

This means reforming educational and training systems, notably by strengthening enterprise-based training and retraining programmes, as well as job-search assistance, especially for young people. [26]

In many societies, however, both industrialized and developing, a significant number of work-seekers find themselves unemployed despite, or even because of, high levels of education — in Asia, as many as 35 per cent of university graduates. This fundamental mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market can be met in the short term by a variety of programmes — from vocationally oriented training to incentives to the private sector to train and employ such people.

In the long term, though, according to the 1993 **Human Development Report**, **"the educational and training systems of societies must be such that people can acquire ... skills that help them master their lives. This change has to come at all levels of learning — from literacy courses to university training."** [27]

WORK-SHARING

The employment challenge has led several industrial countries to raise fundamental questions regarding the nature of work and society:

- **Should societies organize production and work to allow for a more equitable sharing of employment?**
- **How far are gains in performance linked to shorter hours?**
- **Can paid work be distributed differently over the course of a person's life cycle, with alternating periods of paid employment, volunteer and other forms of socially useful work, education and training, leisure and retirement?**

Part-time employment is increasing rapidly in affluent societies, along with time arrangements that are more flexible than the standard work day or work week. Both conventional part-time employment and more innovative work-sharing and job-sharing arrangements may be welcomed by many single parents, spouses or partners who need to divide their time or want to share employment and family responsibilities more fully; young people who could benefit from combining education and training with work; elderly workers desiring a phased retirement; and disabled workers preferring a shorter week. Personal taxation and social security legislation can also be changed to give people greater flexibility in dividing their time.

The ILO recommends that such initiatives be examined without sacrificing other efforts to expand employment.

AN INTERNATIONAL COMPACT

Measures such as public works, active welfare, job-sharing and the protection of sustainable livelihoods are, of course, options for Governments at the national level. Looking beyond to a plan of global action to foster job creation, the ILO has advanced five proposals in **The Employment Challenge:**

- **The industrial countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) must coordinate their policies for faster growth.**

The IMF, in its recent **World Economic Outlook** (1994), predicts an overall annual growth rate of 2.7 per cent in the economies of the OECD countries in 1994 and 1995. Faster growth in these countries is needed to promote growth throughout the developing world. Although careful monetary expansion by OECD countries might provoke renewed inflation, that risk would be reduced if those countries kept pace with each other rather than seeking competitive advantages.

"By increasing, in concert, domestic demand, they would put to work large numbers of their own unemployed. Soon that increased demand would translate itself into higher commodity prices, enabling the poorest developing countries to increase their imports. This, in turn, would promote the non-inflationary growth of exports from the OECD countries.

Everybody would gain — especially the unemployed in rich and poor countries alike."

- **The momentum towards freer trade must be sustained, with reductions in tariffs and other barriers by countries at all levels of development.**

While many developing countries must protect their food producers and their newly nascent industries, they should lower and abolish these restrictions as soon as possible. By contrast, states The Employment Challenge, "**In the industrialized countries, ill-considered protectionist measures are often called for as a response to cheap imports or against the failure of exporting countries to safeguard workers' rights. But trade restrictions defeat their own objective. They reduce the rate of economic growth and thus in turn increase unemployment.** When unemployment is high, workers' conditions rarely improve, and their rights are rarely acknowledged. In this respect, too, progress can best be made by cooperation, not confrontation. Exporting and importing countries must work together to raise standards without resorting to protectionism."

- **The system of official development assistance (ODA) should be entirely reformed to concentrate the resources available on the countries most in need.**

"During the days of the cold war, aid was sent mainly to political allies, or with the aim of maintaining regional stability. With that confrontation over, it is a good time to focus aid deliberately on those who need the most help — say, **the 48 countries (containing 72 per cent of the people in the developing world) that in 1991 had a per capita income below $1,000.**

"... countries that create jobs and improve the lot of their people would be rewarded for doing so. Furthermore, ODA to genuinely poor recipients should be conceded entirely as grants, rather than as loans that have often served mainly to plunge indebted countries even deeper into debt."

- **The outstanding debts of the poorest countries should be reduced – or, better – eliminated.**

"Most of the world's most severely indebted countries are in sub-Saharan Africa... The Uruguay Round [of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, now the World Trade Organization] will not much benefit them, and may (by raising world food prices) make their lives yet harder. Few of them were ever able to borrow much from private creditors. **Their debts to individual donor countries have mostly been forgiven or deferred. Their main outstanding debts are, therefore, owed largely to the multilateral aid agencies, which at present are not allowed formally to write off debt.** It would be reasonable and prudent, and a great saving of administrative time and ingenuity, if a way could be found of eliminating these debts altogether."

- **Basic education for all (especially for women) and retraining for adults are essential preconditions for upgrading employment everywhere. They should be**

supported by more and better technical assistance, including the transfer of educational technology.

Individual countries, the ILO concluded, could certainly exclude themselves from the global growth process by macroeconomic mismanagement, bureaucratic rigidity or institutional corruption.

> "Good governance and the rule of law are the domestic basis for growth. But no one country can keep growing for long on its own. The approach to full employment in an interdependent world must start with an international compact." [28]

MARKETS SERVING PEOPLE

These macroeconomic conditions, though, are only the minimum required to foster full employment. A broad range of social actions need to be taken to make them sufficient to achieve the goal set out in the Preamble of the United Nations Charter: "**to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom**".

To this end, recent United Nations conferences have underlined the importance of access to productive employment and improving conditions of work in their blueprints for the future.

- **At the 1990 World Summit for Children, 159 Governments pledged to "work for the special protection of the working child and for the abolition of illegal child labour" (World Declaration, para. 20).**

- **Agenda 21, adopted by the Earth Summit in 1992, sets out the parameters of sustainable livelihoods in its fourth chapter and, in its twenty-fourth, the vital tasks performed by women in environmental management and development.**

- **The Draft Programme of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995, calls for actions "to overcome barriers to economic resources, such as targeting women in employment programmes, providing guarantee loans for women entrepeneurs, especially in rural areas, introducing programmes and training courses in non-traditional areas of work, revaluing women's traditional work and the informal sector by improving training in these sectors and recognizing them in national accounts and national social security schemes" (para. 89).**

Above all, to realize the Charter's social aims, we must change our view of "people serving markets" to that of "**markets serving people**". As the 1993 **Human Development Report** tells us:

> "Sustainable human development demands more of markets — that they continue to offer their advantages, but that they do so in a more balanced way, combining efficiency, equity and sustainability. Markets are, after all, not an end in themselves ...Working people need to be seen as creators of development rather than as one of its residuals. Employment should be seen as a deliberate process of empowerment rather than as a mere by-product of production."[29]

NOTES

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2. *Human Development Report 1994*, p.3.
3. UNDP factsheet: *Jobless Growth and the Right to Work.*
4. *Human Development Report 1993*, p.34.
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22. *World Development Report*, p.6.
23. Towards Full Employment, p.18.
24. Expert Meeting on Employment, Stockholm, 1993.
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29. *Human Development Report 1993*, p.39.

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Social Integration: Solidarity And Diversity

A stable economy and a stable political order cannot be built in an unstable society. A strong social fabric is a prerequisite to sustainability.
— Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali [1]

The world is becoming a global big city, a global megalopolis. The poor parts of town are no longer confined to the South, nor can the residential areas only be found in the North ... People should be enabled to make their city work.
—Jan Pronk, Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation [2]

The stories in our daily newspapers describe the problems clearly enough:

- **City streets turn into battlefields in the wake of a racially motivated killing;**
- **Religious conflicts among villagers force hundreds of families to flee;**
- **Developers appropriate the lands of an indigenous community;**
- **A drive-by shooting leaves small children casualties of a drug war;**
- **Peasant farmers stream into Third World mega-cities looking for work, or try to slip across the borders of richer countries;**
- **Families break apart, with negative consequences for children, women and the elderly;**
- **Warring ethnic groups destroy social structures;**
- **Diseases, long thought to be under control, appear with new virulence.**

The end of the cold war and of bi-polar ideological rivalry has let loose ethnic, racial, religious and political forces that had long been kept under control. These forces are dangerous not only because of the terrible losses, both human and material, of the conflicts they engender. They are dangerous also because they stem from deep traditional antago-

nisms that are extremely difficult to resolve, because they carry within them the seeds of wider, possibly uncontrolled conflicts.

SOCIAL DISINTEGRATION

There is a pervasive sense that the fabrics of our societies are unraveling, that the centre is not holding. The accelerating globalization of culture and finance, long seen as unifying forces, may in many ways be reinforcing the trend towards social discord and disintegration.

Although the incidence of wars between nations appears to be declining, the security of individuals, families and groups within nations is hostage to the antagonisms and violence stemming from social disintegration.

Even the countries and regions with strong economic growth are under duress as a result of the exclusion of large numbers of people from prosperity and participation in social institutions. Many communities are alarmed at the threat to their traditional cultures which are overwhelmed by the outpouring of powerful icons manufactured by the mass media. Social breakdown appears to be mounting and, unnervingly, to lie beyond the control of Governments and civil institutions.

- **Violence fills in the cracks in society opened by poverty and disintegration;**
- **Child abuse mounts;**
- **Gang warfare flourishes;**
- **Crime thrives on both a petty and an international scale, and with it the self-inflicted violence of drug abuse;**
- **As a result, advances in health, reduced mortality, higher literacy and other social gains are eroded.**

The extent of the crime problem, for example, is particularly evident in the industrialized countries, where detailed statistics are available. In the United States, 14 million crimes were reported in 1992, and one half of one per cent of its population reside in jail.

The murder rate in Italy and Portugal doubled in the second half of the 1980s; in Germany it tripled. During the same period, drug-related crimes doubled in Denmark and Norway and multiplied by a factor of 30 in Japan.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION: A CENTRAL UN CONCERN

The Secretary-General has defined socially integrated societies as those that are **"able to accomodate different and divergent individual and group aspirations within a flexible framework of shared basic values and common interests."**

The United Nations concern with social integration predates even the Organization's formal founding. In 1943, the representatives of 44 countries created the **United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)**, which dealt with the social chaos resulting from the widespread devastation in Europe. **The International Refugee**

Organization was set up to deal with 21 million Europeans — refugees, displaced persons and prisoners of war — who needed assistance and repatriation or resettlement.

There are few areas of social integration or disintegration with which the United Nations has not dealt. **The question is how much past experience, both decades-old and very recent, can meet the needs of a world in which civil conflicts are breaking out with breathtaking speed and violence, and perhaps more important, one in which the gulf between rich and poor continues to widen at a dramatic pace.**

The preparatory process among delegates from UN Member States, UN officials and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has indicated agreement on certain thrusts:

- **That the aim of social integration is not to eliminate differences, but to enable different groups to live together in productive and cooperative diversity within national borders and in the wider setting of the global village;**

- **That efforts on a wide front are needed to promote equal opportunity for all, especially in education and employment;**

- **That it is important to keep a balance between universality and quality, between accessibility for the poorer segments of society and continued interest – solidarity – in participation by those who are better off, and between protection of the weak or vulnerable and the promotion of the interests of broad segments of society.** [3]

INCLUSION: A MAJOR THEME OF UN CONFERENCES

The themes of enabling each and every individual and group to participate in society and making people the focus of development efforts have been spelt out in each of the major United Nations conferences of this decade.

At the 1990 **World Summit for Children**, world leaders undertook a joint commitment "to protect the lives and diminish enormously the suffering of children, to promote the full development of their human potential and to make them aware of their needs, rights and opportunities." (Declaration on the Rights of the Child, para. 8)

In 1992, the **Earth Summit** in Rio de Janeiro recast the UN Charter concept of "economic and social progress and development" in terms of sustainable development, defined as "development that meets present needs without jeopardizing the welfare of future generations by undermining the environment on which all life depends." It declared that "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature." (Principle 1)

The **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development** went on to state, in its fifth Principle, "All States and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in standards of living ..." and, in its seventh, that "Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level." The Declaration goes on to highlight the roles of specific groups in sustainable development: women, youth, indigenous peoples and "other local communities".

The 1993 **World Conference on Human Rights** in Vienna, reaffirming the right to development, reiterated that "the human person is the central subject of development", and that "While development facilitates the enjoyment of all human rights, the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights." (Article 10)

The Conference expressed concern not only about individuals, but about groups of individuals, referring specifically in its Programme of Action to **women and girls; national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities; indigenous peoples; children; disabled persons; refugees and internally displaced persons; and migrants and other vulnerable groups.**

In its 25th article, the Declaration turns to the subject of poverty and its relationship to fundamental human rights and social integration:

> "The **World Conference on Human Rights** affirms that extreme poverty and social exclusion constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent steps are necessary to achieve better knowledge of extreme poverty and its causes, including those related to the problem of development, in order to promote the human rights of the poorest, and to put an end to extreme poverty and social exclusion and to promote the enjoyment of the fruits of social progress. It is essential for States to foster participation by the poorest people in the decision-making process by the community in which they live, the promotion of human rights and efforts to combat extreme poverty."

The 1994 **International Conference on Population and Development** in Cairo expanded further on the theme of inclusion, focusing on women, who constitute the majority of the poor. Its Programme of Action states: **"Advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, and the elimination of all kinds of violence against women, and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility, are cornerstones of population and development-related programmes."**

The Conference reiterated the central tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rio Declaration's concern with sustainable development, adding, **"People are the most important and valuable resource of any nation. Countries should ensure that all individuals are given the opportunity to make the most of their potential."** Specific groups are the subject of subsequent Principles.

The draft Platform for Action of the **Fourth World Conference on Women** sets gender issues in the context of the transformation of societies and emphasizes "the evolving partnership between men and women in a changing world" (para. 8). It goes on to characterize human diversity as an asset to development:

> "Women are not a homogeneous group and there are differences among women with different life experiences. Young women, ageing women, disabled, migrant, refugee or displaced women all have special concerns. However, they also share many of the same concerns derived from their gender. As a result, both the diversity and commonality of women's experience, knowledge, vision and hopes constitute a source of strength ..." (para. 9)

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Just as not all crises are inherently negative, not all kinds of integration are desirable. Totalitarian regimes, for instance, try to maintain a false sense of security and a high degree of social integration through coercion and manipulation.

Even popularly based social, political and religious movements with valid causes will at times seek to impose strict conformity among their followers and their values on others. Similarly, there are many traditional practices and relationships that inherently conflict with human rights.

Social structures that are well integrated in terms of mutual dependencies and obligations and well-defined roles for every member of society have often been predicated on inequality. Feudalism and caste systems are examples.

In recognition of this point, an Expert Meeting on Social Integration convened by the UN in 1993 asserted that **"social integration in the contemporary world has to be on the basis of equality in at least some sense of the term."**

Minimally, there has to be equality of opportunity between individuals without regard to race, caste, ethnicity or gender. Furthermore, **"formal equality of opportunity does not guarantee equality of outcome. Therefore, in addition to equality of opportunity it may be necessary, when considering levels of living, to think of minimum standards below which no one is allowed to fall."**

Along with equality, two additional concepts are used in Social Summit documents and discussion to clarify the proper purposes of social integration: **cohesion** and **inclusion.**

COHESION AND INCLUSION

Cohesion refers to how well the components of a social entity mesh; how well individuals and sub-groupings cooperate and avoid undue conflict. It is not a self-contained social ideal. Cohesion may exist within social structures that are inherently unequal, and it does not guarantee a beneficial purpose to the principles and enterprises of a given society.

Where social cohesion and integration do not exist, there can be deadly consequences, especially for the young. Every breakdown in society affects young minds even more harshly than adults; even if they cannot comprehend all its ramifications, it can scar them for a lifetime.

> "Crime happens every other minute," said one boy to a *New York Times* reporter during the summer of 1994. "You could be coming out of the grocery store and just catch a stray bullet. Last year I got shot myself ... A young kid on a bicycle, no older than 15 or 16, pulled a .380 automatic from his waist and began shooting. I don't know why. Maybe somebody stared at him." [4]

Inclusion has to do with the extent to which all members of a society share in its benefits, find protection under the rule of law and are able to participate fully in economic, social, cultural and political life.

The opposite of inclusion is exclusion. According to the Expert Group, **exclusion can refer to relatively small groups or small proportions of the population, or to situations where a large minority or a majority of the population is excluded from economic,**

social or political rights. The reason for exclusion may be based on race, religion, ethnic background, gender, class or nationality.

Exclusion is not only unfavourable to the group being discriminated against; it creates tensions that are ultimately corrosive to society in general. Consequently, Governments must adopt effective laws and create agencies that prevent discrimination that stems from any of these grounds.

PROMOTING SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The growing recognition of shared interests among citizens around the world underscores the understanding that the marginalization of individuals and vulnerable groups — not to mention entire nations — puts everyone at risk.

From one point of view, the world is measurably richer than it was when the United Nations was born in 1945. Development has vastly expanded the spectrum of choice available to 80 per cent of the global population as it has lengthened life expectancy, cut child and maternal mortality rates, extended education and voluntary family planning and increased both markets and real purchasing power.

From another viewpoint, the world has been incalculably impoverished. In the name of economic progress, we have depleted much of our resource base. In the name of modernization or national unity or even social progress, hundreds of languages, most of them unwritten, have died out during the last five decades. With them vanish the traditional wisdom to which they gave voice, both philosophical and practical, and the cultures that they nurtured.

The chasm between rich and poor has become all the more treacherous because of the ceaseless work of media and commerce to inundate the world with images of luxury and consumer lifestyles around the worked, thus creating a powerful surge of unrealistic and, for most, unrealizeable expectations.

> "Some 20 per cent of the people of the world are living in an orgy of consumption and destruction of irreplaceable natural life-support systems that is unsustainable even for them alone," says José A. Lutzenberger, a former Brazilian Secretary of the Environment and a leading environmental activist. "The prevailing doctrine underlying all development policy, though, is that this lifesyle must be extended to all mankind. The last African behind the last mountain and the last forest dweller in Amazonia are supposed to eventually also have two cars per family. The success of this kind of policy can only accelerate more disaster." [5]

Today, many descendants of those cultures wander rootless, frequently marginal, sometimes criminal, in impoverished rural landscapes and the slums that now define many of our cities and towns.

Radical dislocation and alienation are by no means limited to the surviving indigenous peoples. The world over, virtually all countries face upheaval at their very base in the form of radically altered family patterns, with wholly new roles for women and men.

- **Social critics note that affluent nations that were once proud to call themselves "consumer societies" now recognize that their values, propelled by exponential growth and excessive consumerism, directly contradict the need for sustainable development and social equity.**

- **In calling for a World Summit for Social Development, a number of General Assembly delegates in 1992 spoke of a need to respect the elderly because they are so often the custodians of previously undervalued cultural norms now considered essential to social cohesion.**

- **Several representatives of countries in transition from planned to market economies spoke of the dependence and passivity that the social welfare structures of communism fostered among their citizens and of the need to encourage people to take their destinies into their own hands.**

- **A few delegates of developing countries hard hit by the world recession of the "lost development decade" of the 1980s articulated positions that reversed their earlier paramount concern for economic growth. Instead they spoke of the need to create social conditions that would promote economic recovery.**

The 1994 **Human Development Report**, commissioned by UNDP, cites **Malaysia** as a country whose Government has done a good job in promoting social integration.

Because of determined rural development and education programmes, the share of corporate assets owned by native Malays rose from 2 per cent in 1970 to 20 per cent in 1990. During the same period, the incidence of poverty in Malay households fell from 49 per cent to 16 per cent.

A UNICEF pilot project concentrates on ethnic discrimination. Gypsies, the second largest minority group in **Bulgaria**, have an illiteracy rate 60 per cent higher than that of the general population. Not surprisingly, unemployment is also 60 per cent higher.

"Gypsy children are in a very bad position when they start school," said a linguistics expert from Sofia. "They can't write or even say what the others already know, so they are considered stupid."

The Bulgarian National Committee for UNICEF developed a culturally attuned, bilingual curriculum which is improving the lives of young Gypsies by educating them, in addition, on the history, culture and traditions of Gypsies, providing training in health and personal hygiene, information on sex education and family planning and bilingual language skills which will enable them to have equal employment opportunities. The successful project, initially run in 6 schools in 1993, was extended to another 6 schools in 1994 by a joint review meeting between the project team and Bulgarian national experts. In the process, they had to contend with prejudice against Gypsies and hostility to spending on minorities.

Such successes may serve as models for the integration of other minorities elsewhere. "By showing what can be done for Gypsies, we may be able to show what can be done for a national programme," said Committee director Ivan Chrenozemski. "We must also promote a sense of tolerance among children. We cannot afford hostility among ethnic groups." [6]

MARGINALIZATION

Exclusion carried to extremes results in marginalization. As the Expert Group defines the process, when groups or individuals are excluded along several dimensions simultaneously, they are pushed from the mainstream to the margin of society, often its literal physical margins, urban slums or rural areas with poor or inaccessible land.

Even there, tenuous refuge is threatened by the very Government to which such people look for health care, education, jobs and security. Often they are regarded as, at best, superfluous people, at worst as a potentially dissident and dangerous element to be repressed by any means.

Some NGOs argue that so many people are marginalized in so many regions that "the marginalized are the mainstream."

> "Statistics suggest that deprivation, abuse, and violence directed at marginal populations are more a social norm than an aberration. There is no 'whole' into which those outside the system can be easily integrated ... The threats to human security include the debilitating effects of a growing narcotics/arms trade, the devastating impact of economic adjustment policies, degradation of the environment and degradation of the human spirit, trafficking in children and child prostitution, and a deepening polarization between rich and poor — people and nations." [7]

The world over, migrants and other marginalized groups often perceive Governments as enemies, at best unreachable bodies that are unable or unwilling to help them to solve their health and sanitation problems, to help them in obtaining decent housing and basic education for their children.

One way of bridging this gulf between government and people is decentralization. This involves cutting red tape, bringing officials closer to those they govern and ensuring that citizens have opportunities to share in shaping decisions that affect their lives.

At its best, decentralization of authority and decision-making can empower slum dwellers, rural as well as urban, to revitalize their villages or neighbourhoods, to transform them into bases of social strength rather than misery.

UNDP is engaged in a variety of experiments to put these principles into practice. In **Colombia**, torn since the mid-1970s by guerrilla, paramilitary, drug and criminal gangs, decentralization legislation adopted in 1986 brought local institutions face to face with new responsibilities that they were ill-prepared to shoulder. UNDP moved in to strengthen them with training schemes ranging from budgeting and project formulation to popular participation. In the **barrios** or low-income neighbourhoods of the provincial city of Medellín, home to 12 per cent of that city's population, UNDP has worked with the municipal government, NGOs and **barrio** committees to improve housing and social infrastructure and to protect these neighbourhoods, constructed on unstable mountain slopes, from landslides and other environmental hazards.

MIGRANT POPULATIONS

The **International Organization for Migration** estimates that:

- **70 million persons, mostly from developing countries, are working legally or illegally in other countries as migrants or "aliens";**

- **Over one million persons emigrate permanently to other countries each year; and close to an equal number seek asylum;**

- **The isolation, even open hostility, to migrant workers and their families, is often widespread in host countries, despite the fact that few host-country workers would undertake the kinds of menial tasks performed by these foreigners.**

Citing migrant workers among "groups that have been rendered vulnerable", the 1993 **World Conference on Human Rights** underlined the obligation of States to create and maintain measures for their education, health and social support, as well as the elimination of all forms of discrimination against them.

Such bias frequently flares into xenophobia when job markets shrink, and translates into persecution and violence against immigrant groups. The Social Summit is expected to encourage Governments, often those in the world's most affluent countries, to develop programmes and campaigns to combat these abuses of fundamental human rights.

REFUGEE REPATRIATION

The office of the **UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** estimates that:

- **The number of refugees worldwide averaged about seven million during the 1970s;**

- **The refugee population more than doubled, to about 17 million, in 1991, and then jumped to 20 million in 1994;**

- **Another 20 million persons are displaced in their own lands.**

As one after another political or social catastrophe erupts in States that are no longer able to handle their problems, UNHCR, often in conjunction with UNICEF and other UN bodies, is asked to provide essential humanitarian assistance to internally displaced people as well. Programmes well beyond traditional relief aid must be shaped for those who will never see their homes again or who will spend years away from them.

To help refugees and displaced persons become self-supporting in their country of residence or first asylum, UNHCR provides small loans or grants, and often vocational training as well.

A novel scheme in Pakistan has enlisted **Afghan refugees** as labourers to repair environmental damage by the planting of trees — among them the cash crop of dwarf palms, which produce fronds for the production of mats, baskets and caps. Needy families, the children not least among them, earn money by growing seedlings in nurseries.

What of the refugee who finally returns to his original home? Throughout **Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, UNDP's Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America**

(PRODERE) seeks to heal the wounds of a decade of violence by creating resettlement plans for entire communities, reconciling their factions by helping them reorganize so as to plan their own development.

In the process, schools, clinics and roads are rebuilt and thousands are trained in primary health care, literacy and new agricultural techniques in an effort to redress the very poverty from which the violence grew.

UNHCR sees no other alternative to stemming the refugee tide than preventing conflict and adverse conditions at their very source, before flight becomes the sole avenue open to people at risk.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

An estimated 300 million indigenous people live in more than 70 countries. Usually they are the descendants of the original inhabitants of the lands they inhabit, and their most salient characteristic is their relationship to these lands.

One common bond between most of these peoples is a strong sense of their distinct culture. Another is that they have been marginalized from the mainstream of the dominant society. This has created a complex dilemma for the indigenous people and Governments alike.

Speaking at the UN General Assembly's opening ceremony of the **Year of the World's Indigenous People (1993)**, Premier Lars Emil Johansen, leader of the Greenland Home Rule Government and an Inuit representative, said that indigenous people must be accepted on their own terms. "We do not wish to break up existing nations," he said. "But we also do not wish to become assimilated into a culture, language or lifestyle that is not ours."

So blatantly have indigenous people been marginalized, even when they constitute the majority of the population of the countries in which they live — as they do in Bolivia, Guatemala and Peru, among other Latin American and Asian countries — that a special working group of the **UN Commission on Human Rights** is drafting a universal declaration on their rights. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights also called for the extension of the **International Year of Indigenous People** to a decade-long effort to highlight the problems of indigenous people. The 48th session of the General Assembly approved the recommendation.

The proposed declaration will cover such issues as the indigenous peoples' title to confiscated lands from which they have been forcibly relocated, the harsh labour conditions to which many are still subjected and the campaigns of violence carried out against them when they try to regain fundamental freedoms and control over their resources.

In an effort to preserve the past and ensure the future of such people, UNDP assists indigenous groups to manage their resources and take part in development decisions that affect them.

- **In the Amazon basin, this means cataloguing natural resources, that biodiversity whose incalculable value has only recently been generally acknowledged, and securing land tenure.**

- **In the highlands of Nepal, it means educating the most excluded groups – girls**

and small landholders; combining literacy instruction with practical skills, including forest care; maintaining trails; growing vegetables; and building latrines and fuel-efficient stoves.

- **In Guatemala's highest mountains, it means PRODERE-built housing for the Ixil Mayans in the ruined villages from which they were uprooted.**

VULNERABLE AGE GROUPS

The United Nations has identified specific age groups — children, young adults and the elderly — as marginal because of their vulnerability to abuse and neglect.

Take the aging, for example. Between 1950 and 2025, the world's population of people over age 60 will have grown from 200 million to 1.2 billion and from 8 per cent to 14 per cent of global population.

The greying of the world will require the development of new policies and a massive shift in resources to deal with an increasing aging population. Dr. Nana Apt of HelpAge in Ghana stated their plight in a traditional society in which family structure is undergoing radical upheaval:

> "Older people can no longer look after themselves. The population is moving away from them, going from the country to the city or going outside the country. When people move away, they don't have the money to go back and visit. Even if they are able to send money back—which they can't always do—that's not the same as being around in person to provide care and companionship."

Some vulnerable age groups, though, can be trained to care for each other. A community organizer in a large U.S. city described the process of an experiment that he had set in motion:

> "Our seniors organization started as a group of elderly ladies who talked on the phone each day. We just sort of extended the concept and the circle of acquaintances, and made sure everyone was called every day, just to see that everything is all right. Then we promoted interaction between young people and seniors — the kids help them out at home, go to the store for them. What we're trying to do now is set up a sewing circle. The elderly teach skills like needlework. This kind of interaction is tremendously important. It's a key to so many problems we see in the neighbourhood. The seniors get pushed aside, the kids get pushed aside, while the rest of us go about making fools of ourselves." [8]

The **International Plan of Action on Ageing** and the **World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons**, both adopted by the General Assembly in 1982, provide a framework for the development of national policies ranging from health and nutrition to employment.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Social integration, one of the three main issues of the Social Summit is described by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali as "a pattern of development consistent with justice for the individual, harmony among groups and social cohesion."

"The objective," he says, "is 'a society for all' which assures equal access to opportunities, an absence of discrimination and the protection of diversity."[1]

Securing consensus among world leaders on the best way to promote social integration will be one of the harder tasks taken up by the World Summit for Social Development. As Indian Ambassador M. H. Ansari remarked at the first meeting of the Summit Preparatory Committee, social integration "poses definitional problems generated in perceptible measure by value judgements." The values that are brought to the table at a global conference vary widely, as they derive from a wide range of cultures, differences in national priorities and contending political agendas.

Not surprisingly, there are divergent opinions as to what to do and who should do it. Policy debates between the developed countries of the North and the less developed countries of the South tend to dominate the talks.

But the decision to convene a social development summit of world leaders drew on the perception that progress on these difficult issues is now possible, and that deteriorating conditions demand action. This hope is borne out by areas of compromise and consensus that are emerging from Summit preparatory talks.

A position that carries weight among the northern countries was stated at the initial Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting by the United States representative, who suggested that "the starting point for social development must be respect for human rights and individual liberty" and that market forces "remain the single most powerful actor in shaping human behaviour". At the second PrepCom, U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Global Affairs Timothy E. Wirth further insisted that "the framework of law and respect for human rights are key to who we are, and we will continue to emphasize them at the Social Summit".

Developing country concerns

The implication that the key to social integration lies in democratic structures and the rights of the individual provokes a twofold concern among many developing countries.

"While we should be basing our goals on shared human values, we believe these values are lived differently in different countries," says Mr. Amine Khene, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Algerian Mission to the UN and chief Social Summit negotiator for the Group of 77 (or "G-77", representing 134 developing countries). There is no single political or economic model that is universally valid, he says, and diversity among societies should be respected as much as diversity among individuals. The "shared values" he cites – "non-discrimination and solidarity – emphasize community as much as individualism."

Secondly, he adds, "you cannot achieve social integration unless people have food, shelter, health, access to culture – things the North tends to take as givens. While we recognize the undoubted advantages of a market-driven economy, it would be a fatal mistake if responsibility for basic human needs is left to the spontaneous vagaries of the marketplace."

Assigning responsibility

The importance of meeting basic human needs is not in dispute. A PrepCom US position paper says that "essential goals" such as "providing for every human being adequate nutrition, primary health care, safe drinking water and sanitation, basic literacy and numeracy" must be met if integration is to succeed. But there are differences on whether the causes and solutions to these needs are primarily national or international.

"Dominant world economic policies are marginalizing people, thwarting the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and creating crisis," a spokesman for a caucus of NGOs said at the second PrepCom session, August-September 1994. "When this big conflict explodes, you call it 'Rwanda' or 'Somalia' " The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization – which has replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) – represent the interests of the rich countries and are unaccountable to developing countries and the poor, according to this critique. The caucus is demanding that these institutions be "subordinated" to the UN.

More diplomatically, G-77 has urged "mechanisms" to ensure "stronger cooperation" between the international financial institutions and the United Nations. The UN, Mr. Khene says, "is the only forum where States are supposed to meet as equals". G-77 has also restated its insistence that industrialized countries devote 0.7 per cent of their national production to official development assistance (ODA) – only four countries have ever reached this target – and take more decisive action to relieve nations burdened by overwhelming debt.

A national focus

A Prep Com European Union (EU) position paper takes issue with the need for "new international mechanisms". It suggests that the job at hand is to stimulate the private sector and make Governments more efficient and democratically transparent, rather than engaging in "negative and confrontational portrayals of international economic relations".

"In our view, priority has to be at the national level", says German Ambassador to the UN Gerhard Henze, representing the EU at Social Summit talks. "You cannot eliminate poverty, high unemployment and social disintegration if the country itself is not determined to do so. All that international assistance can provide is help for self-help." Furthermore, the North is unlikely to increase ODA in the near future because, as he puts it, "money is tight".

Ambassador Henze lines up, however, with the G-77 criticism of structural adjustment programmes – programmes of governmental austerity and free-market policies agreed to by indebted countries as a condition for low-interest IMF loans. "In the Latin American countries, for instance, adjustment was accomplished at the expense of the low-income groups and of the social dimension", he says. "There is a lot of catching up to do. This is a key area where improved cooperation between the UN and international financial institutions is needed." Debt relief also should be on the table at the Social Summit.

"The outcome of the Social Summit should not be limited to UN resolutions", Ambassador Henze states. "It should be taken into account by Governments and international financial institutions. There has to be a coordinated effort."

Global cooperation is also endorsed by the G-77. At the United Nations and in fora such as the Social Summit, Mr. Khene says, "North and South can meet on even terms".

"Now we can have a more balanced approach to the problems of the world", he adds. "Since the end of the cold war, this ideological imperative to prove that the Western way is the best and only way no longer serves a purpose. People and nations should be more relaxed about finding new paths; about making an intellectual effort to redefine the roles of the State, the market and civil society."

1. Overview paper of the UN Secretary-General (A/CONF/166/PC/6).

WOMEN

The designation of women as a marginalized group is a controversial concept. Some Governments, which have strongly promoted women's rights and gender equality during the Social Summit talks, argue that women should be considered a marginalized group.

Others – including the Women's Caucus – take issue with this claim, pointing out that women constitute roughly half of humanity, have achieved near universal equality under the lawand are active participants in the most dynamic economic sectors.

Statistics show signficant advances for women since the UN's proclamation of 1975 as **International Women's Year**; equality of opportunity and equal pay for equal work are *de jure* if not *de facto* legal obligations in the 134 countries that have ratified the **UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women**. However, most such provisions can be circumvented easily, and no society has yet placed a price on the value of household work, including child care, unless some individual outside the home is hired and paid to do it.

Virtually all the bodies of the UN system are implementing programmes to improve the status of women and girls, ranging from the community health projects of **WHO** and **UNICEF** to the establishment of income-generating activities and credit schemes for micro-enterprises by **ILO**, **UNDP** and the **UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**. The emphasis, however, has shifted from gaining equity for women in the development process to empowering them for greater self-reliance. Nowhere is this more evident than in the national political process.

The **African Women's Development and Communication Network**, an NGO supported by several UN programmes, addressed women's exclusion from political decision-making in a recent election in Kenya. It publicized the views of Kenyan women candidates from all political parties and used the media to come to their aid when they were sexually harassed by male opponents. For the first time in Kenya's history, women — six of them — were elected to parliament.

PARTICIPATION

There is no single answer to the social anxieties voiced in the General Assembly or outside it. Nor is there any doubt that a healthy, well-educated citizenry contributes enormously to social cohesion. Yet the conditions for social integration often seem to flourish in circumstances that seem the least favourable — in the social chaos of shanties where the impulse to organize stems from the sheer need to survive.

For several decades, social scientists have documented countless grass-roots initiatives among the poor and the dispossessed that spring from the need to share labour or a common resource or information or the need to obtain goods and services denied to them by some external force, be it a market or a Government. This potential must be harnessed.

People's participation in making the decisions that shape their own lives seems to provide at least a basis for self-respect and social dignity. In such efforts often lies the genesis of self-help and self-reliance, as well as creative solutions to problems that prove to be far less costly, in environmental and cultural capital as well as in cash, than schemes designed by external experts.

In the words of Margaret Catley-Carlson, President of the Population Council, when

she addressed the **World Hearings on Development** in June 1994, there is no "**quick fix, whether in migration, family planning, international development or labour-market realities ... Rather, patient change strategies that encompass small changes across a wide spectrum** of issues" must be encouraged by Governments and other leaders.

One of the great challenges of the next century is enabling people to do more for themselves, to make development a process of and by ather than for t.em. This holds equally for the office clerk in Ecuador, the subsistence farmer in Malawi, the worker in Bangkok and the factory worker in Sweden. Democracy in one form or another is intrinsic to this process. As Secretary-General has observed in the **Agenda for Development:**

> "Democracy and development are linked in fundamental ways. They are linked because democracy provides the only long-term basis for managing competing ethnic, religious and cultural interests in a way that minimizes the risk of violent internal conflict. They are linked because democracy is inherently attached to the question of governance, which has an impact on all aspects of development efforts. They are linked because democracy is a fundamental human right, the advancement of which is itself an important measure of development ... In the absence of democracy as a forum for competition and a vehicle for change, development will remain fragile and be perpetually at risk." [9]

NOTES

1. *An Agenda for Development*, para.105.
2. In the general debate of the Second Committee, 11 October 1994.
3. *Draft Declaration and Draft Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development*, 3 June 1994.
4. *The New York Times*, 22 August 1994.
5. From José A. Lutzenberger's paper titled, "Knowledge and Wisdom Must Come Back Together", June 1993, p.9.
6. *UNICEF Annual Report 1994*.
7. From the summary of the 46th Annual NGO/DPI Conference, 1993, titled "Social Development: A New Definition for Security in the Post-Cold War World".
8. Ed Powell, the UMMA Group, an NGO in Brooklyn, NY.
9. *An Agenda for Development*, paras.120, 122.

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Partners in Social Development

Few, if any, societies can pursue all aspects of development unaided. Development requires international cooperation and it requires that other actors assist States in their efforts ... The sheer number of actors in development today, the global trends that their activities reflect, the interrelationship of problems and the mechanisms for their solution all highlight the urgent need for greater awareness and more determined commitment ... The United Nations is a forum where the voices of all States, great and small, can be heard with equal clarity, and where non-State actors can make their views known to the widest audience.

— An Agenda for Development [1]

So that the United Nations can carry out today's pressing mandates in the area of social development and human security, the Secretary-General has called on the Organization and its Member States to forge new partnerships with the major actors in society, including NGOs and the private sector.

These new partnerships — which will require new understandings, new policies and institutional innovations — represent an evolution in which the UN and its Member States rely increasingly upon the expertise and support of other constituencies, including the mass media, with their enormous potential for education and the shaping of attitudes. This chapter looks briefly at the role of each of these partners.

GOVERNMENTS

Although the United Nations Charter begins with the often-quoted phrase "We the peoples", the Organization is composed of **States** — 184 Member States as of September 1994, representing approximately 98 per cent of the world's 5.63 billion people. Since its founding, the United Nations has conducted its development work primarily with the Governments of those States.

Article 56 of the UN Charter states that Member States must "take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization to achieve economic and social progress and universal respect for human rights."

Governments remain the primary actors, providing the fundamental frameworks for society. In this function lies the explicit moral obligation to lead by example and provide the kind of governance that serves the needs of their citizens.

In principle, both the power and the authority to implement policies in a peaceful, orderly manner should be vested in Governments by the citizens they govern. Good governance is characterized by participatory **democracy** which, Secretary-General Boutros

Boutros-Ghali declares, is "**a fundamental human right, the advancement of which is itself an important measure of development.**" [2]

This premise — that democracy is linked in a fundamental way with development — is a basic United Nations principle. It has been reiterated and endorsed by all the United Nations- sponsored world gatherings focused on social development, from the World Summit for Children in 1990 to the Earth Summit (UNCED) in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) and others.

In recent years the UN has increasingly emphasized the promotion of good governance — the use of State power to promote social progress, particularly around human rights and democracy — to assure sustainable development.

THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

There is widespread agreement within the General Assembly that development efforts have fallen seriously short of goals set by the international community and that the United Nations itself must be better organized to effectively carry out its role as coordinator of multilateral work. This reorganization and realignment is an ongoing process that reflects much of the new thinking about development. The need for institutional integration and policy coordination is a central concern.

While all United Nations bodies can be said to deal either directly or indirectly with social development taken in its broadest context, different responsibilities are delegated to specific organs within the UN.

The **General Assembly** retains fundamental responsibility for international economic and social cooperation; in particular, its Second Committee (Economic and Financial) and the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) deal with social development issues.

The **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, a subsidiary of the General Assembly, coordinates the development work of the UN and its specialized agencies and institutions and often initiates new courses of action. It also oversees UN relations with NGOs. Its 54 member countries (18 new members are elected each year in a three-year cycle) study and report on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related themes and make recommendations, including the convening of major conferences, to the General Assembly.

A large number of **commissions, subcommissions and working groups** reporting to ECOSOC work in the overall area of social development. These include:

- **Commission for Social Development**
- **Commission on Sustainable Development**
- **Commission on the Status of Women**
- **Statistical Commission**
- **Population Commission**
- **Commission on Human Rights**
- **Commission on Human Settlements (HABITAT)**

- **Commission on Narcotic Drugs**
- **Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**
- **Commission on Science and Technology for Development**
- **Commission on Transnational Corporations**
- **Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities**
- **Working Group on Protection of Mentally Ill Persons**
- **Working Group on Slavery**
- **Working Group on Indigenous Populations**
- **Working Group on Crime of Apartheid**
- **Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.**

In addition, ECOSOC oversees five **Regional Commissions** — for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia — which advise Governments and formulate and take action on social issues in their own specific geographic, political and cultural contexts.

The **Secretariat** provides substantive support of a technical and strategic planning nature to other organs of the UN and administers the programmes and policies laid down by them. In recent years, responding to recommendations by the General Assembly, much of the economic and social work of the UN Secretariat has been reorganized. As part of a major restructuring, in 1993, three departments were created where most of this work takes place.

The **Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD)** provides support for the central coordinating and policy-making functions of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies. The Department has primary responsibility in the UN system for the follow-up to Agenda 21 — the programme of action adopted at the **UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992)**; and for preparations for the **World Summit for Social Development (1995)** and the **Fourth World Conference on Women (1995)**. It was also responsible for the **Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (1994).**

The Department's main activities are policy development, integrating the economic as well as the social and environmental dimensions of such major policy issues as growth and adjustment, poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and the advancement of women. The Department aims to bring together elements of social and economic policy to advance international cooperation through the UN system.

It provides technical secretariat services to central intergovernmental bodies and coordinates preparation for and follow-up to global conferences and initiatives such as the **New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and a Convention to Combat Desertification.**

The **Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA)** serves as the lead unit for economic and social information within the United Nations. The Department cooperates closely with the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant agencies. It provides statistical support to all parts of the Organization, as

well as to users of statistics worldwide.

The international statistical series produced by the Department include national accounts, prices, international trade, population, social indicators, environment, industry, energy, transport and housing. The Department monitors population trends and examines the relationship between population change, resources, the environment and socio-economic development. It prepares population estimates and projections and analyses population policies.

Every year it prepares surveys of the world economic and social situation (**World Economic and Social Survey**), assessing emerging issues, short- and medium-term trends and prospects in development, and longer-term economic growth, trade and international financial transfers.

The **Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS)** acts as an executing agency for programmes and projects relating to institution-building and human resources development, in areas such as: development policies and planning, natural resources and energy planning, governance and public management, and financial management and accounting. The Department also acts as a focal point for the provision of management services and implementation functions for technical cooperation.

Sustainable development remains incomplete unless we keep people in the centre of development ...

— Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Article 71 of the UN Charter provides for ECOSOC to arrange consultation with "non-governmental organizations" (NGOs) concerned with matters of social and economic development. Today, some 1,500 development NGOs are accredited to ECOSOC, including over 500 environmental NGOs which became affiliated in connection with the 1992 Earth Summit.

In today's swiftly evolving world, relationships between major development partners are undergoing change and adjustment. Over the last decade, the world has witnessed the inability of Governments everywhere to cope with the proliferation of social problems and the rapid dissolution of many socialist systems and simultaneous transition to democracy in many developing countries, accompanied by a growing community-level awareness of social problems. The result has been an expansion in the number, scope and influence of NGO activities in every region.

Much of this change reflects new trends in how people organize, how they promote their agendas, and how they protect their communities amid increasing social disruption.

Describing themselves in positive terms as the "independent sector" rather than as non-governmental organizations, NGOs are by no means a cohesive or homogeneous group.

- **On the contrary, they are characterized by enormous diversity in size, scope, focus and resources, ranging from philanthropic organizations to political action committees, from trade unions to foundations, from religious communities to self-help community organizations.**

NGOS: PRESSING FOR CHANGE

Literally thousands of development NGOs participate actively in the debates and negotiations surrounding the UN's cycle of development conferences. As representatives of civil society, especially those most marginalized, NGOs have often helped the United Nations and Governments reshape their agendas. Anticipating the evolution of public policy, they often propose innovative solutions to pressing social problems that are later adopted by Governments.

Development NGOs cover a wide spectrum of issues and people and vary in size and structure. They function on different levels – some global, others more regional, and most making their mark at the grass-roots level.

On one end of the spectrum are the transnational NGOs. There are international trade union confederations that represent scores of national trade unions. By virtue of having such a large membership, they can work effectively as lobby groups to promote the interests of millions of working people throughout the world.

Serving as a bridge between grass-roots and global activism are agencies like the **International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW),** a global NGO representing over 70 national and more than 20 international member organizations. It promotes social welfare, justice and social development through public advocacy, NGO development programmes, information-sharing, conferences and collaboration with other actors in the social and economic development sphere.

Many global NGOs specialize in issues pertaining to specific demographic groups, be it children, youth, women, indigenous people, migrant workers, or the elderly. **Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)** is a third world organizational network for women. Headquartered in Barbados, DAWN was set up in 1985 by and for women of the South to formulate issues from their perspective and to provide them a vehicle for influencing public policy. It is involved in research – on themes such as food, energy and debt crisis in relation to women, and reproductive rights – as well as publications, training of women, communications and advocacy.

Most global NGOs function not only as lobbyists in international fora, but also as channels through which funds are made available to regional and small-scale NGOs all across the world. **Enda Inter-Arabe (Environment and Development in the Arab World),** for instance, is part of a global NGO but operates at a regional level in the Middle East. Since 1990, it has worked in the poor urban neighbourhood of Hay Ettadhamen in Tunis, counselling young people and providing them with vocational training, besides improving general health and hygiene measures.

Another type of NGOs, community-based in their orientation, are the cooperatives which are working with people around the world, especially in rural areas, to take direct responsibility for their own social and economic progress. One cooperative in Bolivia, for example, produces 60 per cent of the country's poultry and 30 per cent of its eggs; another six-million-member cooperative in India is the country's largest producer of dairy products; fourteen American cooperatives are included in the Fortune 500 listing of the country's largest corporations.

While they function at community levels, cooperatives get together on an international level through such organizations as the **International Cooperative Alliance (ICA),** which has an individual membership of more than 700 million, including about 400 million in developing countries.

Due to their proximity to the people concerned, grass-roots NGOs have often responded more quickly to development needs. When drought hit Southern Africa in 1992, grass-roots NGOs played a major role in distributing food to vulnerable groups and arranging for emergency water and sanitation in association with Governments and the United Nations. The **Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP)** was one such group in Zimbabwe involved in the drought relief programmes. It acts as an umbrella organization for local groups, each with five to 30 rural families, focusing on income-generating activities in agriculture.

- **Not only do their aims and practices vary, their relations with Governments also differ; while some are virtually indistinguishable from official-aid dispensers, others are outspoken critics of the powers that be.**

- **In developing countries, NGOs have a long and important history in development.**

- **Many development NGOs are "grass-roots" organizations, which tend to be small aggregations of individuals that engage in development activities at the community level.**

- **They are assisted by grass-roots support organizations, intermediaries that forge links between the often remote levels of government, donors, financial institutions and aid recipients.**

- **These grass-roots organizations are often linked to national federations and/or international associations, some of which have become formidable advocates for social development.**

- **NGOs have continued to grow rapidly in number, outreach and impact. Whereas during the 1980s NGOs touched the lives of some 100 million people in developing countries, today their work affects the lives of over 250 million people around the world.**

- **By working directly at the grass-roots level, NGOs reach beyond Government ministries to give concrete assistance to about one fifth of the 1.3 billion people who live in absolute poverty. NGOs have offered considerable direct assistance to poor people in Asia (60 million), Latin America (25 million) and Africa (12 million).** [3]

NGOs have played a major role in catalyzing demand for many of the major UN conferences on socio-economic and environmental issues. They have developed strategies with a visible impact on the Programmes of Action emerging out of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights and the UN Conference on Population and Development, as well as on the inputs for the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. "NGO input is vital in order to help develop action plans that address people's real needs — as well as help in monitoring and evaluating subsequent achievements", said Yao Graham of the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), based in Ghana.

What is the explanation for this new dynamic relationship between NGOs, Governments and the UN? **Renewing the United Nations System**, a book based on a Ford Foundation study by former high-level UN officials Sir Brian Urquhart and Erskine Childers, asserts that NGOs have recognized the "indispensable role of multilateral machinery" and want the UN to play a more influential role vis-à-vis Governments and other entities.

While NGOs working in the area of humanitarian relief and peace-keeping are proving crucial to the UN's undertakings in these areas, often working shoulder-to-shoulder with UN staff in the field, they want more involvement in UN policy decisions which affect their

lives, their safety and their effectiveness, adds the book.

In comparison to Governments, NGOs often have distinct advantages — namely, their flexibility, informality, and highly committed staff. In addition, they often offer direct community presence. These advantages make them especially suited to complex development projects such as those aimed at alleviating poverty.

In preparation for the Social Summit, NGOs formed themselves into a number of "caucuses" focusing on issues such as human rights, women, youth, families, the rights of the child, health and development. They met regularly during the Preparatory Committees, collaborating on the formulation of a "**quality benchmark**" paper for the Social Summit, calling for:

- **Ratification by all nations of the six core human rights treaties and relevant ILO conventions;**
- **Revision of structural adjustment policies;**
- **An enhanced role for treaty bodies in monitoring the programmes and projects that have an impact on social development;**
- **Social audits to gauge the impact of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other new trade policies on human welfare in the South;**
- **Economic policies aimed at achieving sustainable development, and implementation of a code of conduct for transnational corporations;**
- **Promotion of debtreduction initiatives, especially the write-off of multilateral debt in Africa and all low-income countries;**
- **Achievement of ODA of 0.7 per cent of GNP by the year 2000 by all countries; also establishment of a goal of 50 per cent ODA earmarked for social spending;**
- **Curbing of arms trade worldwide along with a decrease in military expenditures;**
- **Provision of the necessary legal and regulatory frameworks to discourage corruption and facilitate democratic participation by civil society;**
- **Assurance that all issues and commitments are gender-specific and that laws effectively prevent violence, harassment and discrimination against women;**
- **Collection of data on social development and environmental sustainability, and agreement that the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights be given responsibility to monitor compliance.**

Increasingly, NGOs view their role as approaching a kind of "checks-and-balances" system with Governments. As social commentator David Korten put it in a recent address

to the Society for International Development, the NGOs' "people-centred consensus" role could be to "protect the economically and politically powerful from the social and ecological consequences of their (own) actions". They could help enable people at the local level to solve their own problems, which, he suggested, may have assumed global proportions primarily because "we have deprived people of the means to deal effectively with them at the grass-roots level."

EMERGING PARTNER: THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Not only nations and NGOs, but also entrepreneurs in the private sector are witnessing rapid changes, particularly at the international level, that are affecting their role in international development. Nothing short of revolutionary is the historic convergence of several globe-spannning trends, including the globalization of markets, the rise of the information economy and the spread of transnational corporations (TNCs).

The independent, transnational nature of TNCs and the fact that they wield budgets that dwarf those of many nations have long coloured their relations with the United Nations, its Member States and NGOs. Their power, efficiency, international scope and outreach, enormous wealth and influence, however, are increasingly seen by both the UN and formerly suspicious Member States as potential resources in support of socially responsible activities.

Just as the TNCs responded to public pressure from environmentalists, some executives are taking voluntary steps towards socially responsible behaviour. Whether through altruism, enlightened self-interest, smart public relations or a combination of all three, some corporations are developing high standards and practices and model programmes in support of sustainable development and human rights. To this end, they have launched a variety of public service campaigns, often involving remarkable amounts of money.

Their growing role in the integration of the global economy implies increased social responsibilities and has encouraged the business community, when faced with calls for external controls, to establish voluntary standards and individual firms to adopt their own corporate guidelines, especially in the area of human resources development.[4]

THE UN AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR: FIRST STEPS

Growing interdependence is encouraging collaboration between the public and private sectors. Leaders in business and industry, from local to global, are increasingly taking voluntary initiatives towards self-regulation and assumption of greater responsibility in ensuring that the negative impact of their activities on human and environmental health and security are minimized.[5]

The United Nations, also, has reached out to the private sector at various levels. The preparations for the **UN Conference on Environment and Development** intensified involvement by the private sector, culminating in the creation of the **Business Council for Sustainable Development**, a group of some 50 major corporations from over 20 countries worldwide.

As Agenda 21 notes, **"entrepreneurship is one of the most important driving forces for innovations, increasing market efficiencies and responding to challenges and opportunities. Small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, in particular, play a very**

important role in the social and economic development of a country."[6]

Intense involvement at the highest executive levels at UNCED resulted in a Business Council Declaration which states:

> "Business will play a vital role in the future health of this planet. As business leaders, we are committed to sustainable development, to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the welfare of future generations ... New forms of cooperation between government, business and society are required to achieve this goal ... The world is moving toward deregulation, private initiatives, and global markets. This requires corporations to assume more social, economic and environmental responsibility ... To move from vision to reality demands strong leadership from the top ... A clear vision of a sustainable future mobilizes human energies to make the necessary changes, breaking out of familiar and established patterns. As leaders from all parts of society join forces in translating the vision into action, ... we members of the bcsd commit ourselves to promoting this new partnership in changing course towards our common future." [7]

In addition to older organizations such as the International Chamber of Commerce, there are other vehicles in this nascent partnership.

The **Business Council for the United Nations** supports the UN's work by bringing a greater understanding of its aims and activities to the world business community. In addition to annual conferences which sponsor visits by UN Ambassadors to various cities, the Council also hosts monthly corporate conferences for leading business executives at UN Headquarters in New York.

The **Global Business Forum**, a New York-based private, limited- membership organization consisting of international corporations based primarily in industrialized countries, also brings together business executives and opinion leaders to exchange views on key business issues. Unlike trade associations or lobbyist groups which advocate certain actions, they provide a neutral forum for frank, off-the-record exchanges of opinion on issues with specific impact on the strategic and operational environment facing corporate management.

PEOPLE AS PARTNERS

The characteristics of civil society are as varied as the communities and interests from which they spring. People organize to try to satisfy their needs, from child care to their social lives, from education to livelihoods. The United Nations promotes respect for this infinite diversity of experience while attempting to identify underlying patterns common to them.

After decades of successes and failures in promoting development, the United Nations also has come to understand that one of the best guarantees of success in development efforts is the active support and participation of the communities involved.

For this to happen, people must be placed at the centre of development efforts, and social security must be thought of much in the same way as State security. For this reason, the United Nations is reaching out increasingly to civil society to build new partnerships in development. For the world Organization to be effective, it needs the active involvement

and understanding of all people.

One of the challenges facing us in this period of upheaval and change is to identify the new opportunities now available for progress and renewal.

Although urgent social problems beset our societies the world over, we can see the powerful movement of peoples throughout Central and Eastern Europe towards autonomy and fundamental freedoms, the demise of apartheid in South Africa, the trend towards democratization in scores of countries and the advancement of women. These are very positive changes in the midst of social conflict, dislocation and occasional chaos.

The UN was not designed for the direct participation of individuals. Individual involvement is mainly through the thousands of non-governmental organizations that are directly or indirectly linked to the Organization. Still, the Organization is exploring ways for better interaction with the public at large.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995 offers the world body a special opportunity to reach out to a new generation of potential supporters, among them youth groups and today's students. The Secretary-General places special hope in youth and women as constituencies that will provide the Organization and its efforts in social development the local-level support required to implement policies and programmes.

The crowded calendar of public events for this commemoration, including a global teach-in and worldwide radio and television campaigns, reflects the enthusiasm and innovation with which people around the world are taking up the challenge of the rising demands and expectations of the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1. *An Agenda for Development*, paras. 140, 151, 14.
2. Ibid. paras. 140, 151, 14.
3. *Human Development Report 1993*, p. 7.
4. UNCTAD press release, TAD/INF/2459, p. 4.
5. *Agenda 21*, para. 30.3, p. 398.
6. Ibid. para. 30.17, p. 401.
7. *Changing Course*, by Stephan Schmidheiny, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1992.

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An Agenda for Development. Report of the Secretary-General. New York. United Nations. 6 May 1994. A/48/935 and A/49/665, 11 November 1994. A/C/E/F/R/S.
Outlines principles to guide development. Shows how the development process requires action in the areas of peace, economy, environment, society and democracy.

An Agenda for Development: Recommendations. Report of the Secretary-General. New York. United Nations. 11 November 1994. A/49/665. A/C/E/F/R/S.
An addendum to the report of 6 May 1994, giving specific recommendations for action by the United Nations and the international community.

An Agenda for Peace. Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations. New York. 1992. DPI/1247. A/C/E/F/R/S.
Analyzes and recommends ways of strengthening within the framework and provisions of the Charter the United Nations capacity for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping.

Change: Threat or Opportunity for Human Progress? New York. UNDP. 1991. Sales No. E.91.III.B.10. 5-volume set. $75.00. E.
Analysis of worldwide changes and their possible impact on humankind's future. Reflects views and visions of more than 80 world-renowned experts.

Changing Population Age Structures 199O - 2015. Demographic and Economic Consequences and Implications. Geneva. United Nations. ECE. 1992. 407 pages. Sales No. GV.E.92.O.2O. $8O.OO. E.
Consequences on the economy, the labour market and society at large of the changing age structure, including impacts on the structures and roles of families and households.

Children and Development in the 1990s: A UNICEF Sourcebook on the Occasion of the World Summit for Children. New York. UNICEF. 1990. Sales No. E.90.XX.USA.8. $35.00. E.
Organized around a set of ambitious goals for children in the 1990s. Discusses some economic conditions necessary to make the social goals for children feasible.

The Cultural Dimension of Development: Towards a Practical Approach. Paris. UNESCO. 1994. 200 pages. E/F/S.
Describes the means for integrating cultural factors into development.

The Crisis of Social Development in the 199Os: Preparing for the World Social Summit. Geneva. UNRISD. 1994. 57 pages. E.
Includes: Rethinking social development in the 1990s; Economic restructuring and new social policies; Ethnic diversity and public policies; The challenge of rebuilding war-torn societies.

"The Employment Challenge. An Agenda for Global Action." A policy paper commissioned by UNDP for the World Summit for Social Development. New York.*UNDP* 1994.
Summarizes discussions of the ILO/UNDP Technical Meeting on the nature of the employment problem and macroeconomic solutions held in May 1994.

Environment, Employment and Development (ed. A. S. Bhalla). Geneva. ILO. 1992. ISBN 92-2-108250-4. Sw F 25.00. E.
Examines employment implications of sustainable development, reviews approaches to minimizing environmental degradation, and looks at environmentally sound approaches to employment promotion.

Graphic Presentation of Basic Human Settlements Statistics. Nairobi. UNCHS. 1991. 39 pages. HS/254/91/E. ISBN 92-1-131179-9.
Presents statistical data in a visual comparative perspective by projecting national human settlements statistics on a world map.

Human Development Report. New York. UNDP. 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994. ISBN 0-19-508457-8. $17.95 paperback. $29.95 clothbound. A/D/E/F/G/I/P/S.
Assesses the state of human development worldwide and suggests practical actions for increasing the national and external aid resources allocated to health, education and employment.

Implementation of the Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2OOO. Second Evaluation. 8th Report on the World Health Situation. Volume I. Global review. Geneva. WHO. 1993. 184 pages. 1231008. ISBN 92-4-160281-3. Sw F 31.5O. A/C/E/F/R/S.
Provides a global overview of changes in the world health situation as determined through analysis of data submitted by 151 countries for 1985-1990.

The Incidence of Poverty in Developing Countries. An ILO Compendium of Data (by Hamid Tabatabai). Geneva. ILO. 1993. ISBN 92-2-108253-9. Sw F 17.5O. E.
Provides easy access to statistics on poverty in both rural and urban areas, at the national and regional levels.

International Cooperation for the Eradication of Poverty in Developing Countries. New York. 1991. A/C/E/F/R/S.
Contains a review of national experience in combating poverty and proposals for international measures for the eradication of poverty.
The Least Developed Countries 1993-1994 Report. Brussels. UNCTAD. 1994. 166 pages. Sales No. E.94.II.D.4. $55.00. A/E/F/S.
Reviews recent developments and prospects, as well as selected issues in domestic policy reforms and donor response to the special needs and circumstances of least developed countries.

Monitoring Social Progress in the 199Os: Data Constraints, Concerns and Priorities (ed. David G. Westendorff and Dharam Ghai). UK/USA. UNRISD. 1993. 348 pages. E.
Examines the limitations of social data, especially in developing countries, and identifies a number of strategies for improving data quality in the short and medium term.

New Imperatives of Human Security (by Mahbub ul Haq). A policy paper commissioned by UNDP for the World Summit for Social Development. UNDP. New York. 1994.
The author suggests a new concept of security to move from arms and territorial security to the security of people and individuals through development and the evolution of a global civil society.

Poverty Reduction and the World Bank: Progress in Fiscal 1993. World Bank. ISBN 0-82-13-2828-X. $6.95. E.
Assesses the Bank's progress in supporting poverty reduction during fiscal 1993, reflects on the lessons learned, lays out the continuing challenges.

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The nations of the world ranked according to their achievements in health nutrition, education, family planning and progress for women.

Report on the World Social Situation 1993. New York. United Nations. 1993. Sales No. E.93.IV.2. $ 24.95. A/C/E/F/R/S.
Informs on the world social situation. Analyzes policy choices in several countries.
The Situation of Elderly Women. Available Statistics and Indicators. Santo Domingo. INSTRAW. 1994.
Overview of the situation of elderly women in different regions of the world using comparative statistics and indicators. Identifies existing data gaps.

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The State of the World's Children 1995. New York. UNICEF. 89 pages. $8.5O. Translated into many languages. A free 12-page summary is available.
Describes progress made in children's health against disease and poor nutrition. Notes that the principal threat to the poorest comes from the mutually reinforcing problems of poverty, population growth and environmental deterioration.

The State of World Population 1993. New York. UNFPA. Annual Report. A/E/F/J/S.
Annual report on the major issues and activities related to world population.

The State of the World's Refugees: The Challenge of Protection. New York. UNHCR. 1993. Biennial Report. 208 pages. ISBN O-14-O2.3487-X.
$ 14.OO. E/F/G/I/J/S.
Covers wide range of key issues affecting refugees, including many that are linked to fundamental questions of peace and international security.

Towards Full Employment. Contribution of the International Labour Organization to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development. ILO. Geneva. 1994.
Proposes international as well as national instruments of economic and social policy for the generation of productive employment. Suggests policy coordination for achieving full employment.

Visions of the Future of Social Justice: Essays on the Occasion of the ILO's 75th Anniversary. Geneva. ILO. 1994.
ISBN 92-2-108011-0. Price not yet fixed. E/F/J/S.
Presents views on the future of the world of work and employment. Examines the social clause in international trade agreements, the reintegration of those excluded from economic activity, social dialogue and international labour standards.

World Development Report. Washington. World Bank. 1994: Infrastructure for development. Hardcover: ISBN 0-19-520991-5. $37.95. Paperback: ISBN 0-19-520992-3. $16.95. A/C/E/F/G/J/P/S.
Examines national health policies world-wide and measures their success in improving health and controlling health spending. Topics of previous world development reports: Development and the environment (1992). The challenge of development (1991). Poverty (1990). Investing in health (1993).

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Contains an employment survey, issues of sharing work and family responsibilities, employers' organizations, financing and managing health care, chemicals and the work environment.

World Economic and Social Survey 1994. Current Trends and Policies in the World Economy. United Nations. New York. 1994.
The United Nations' annual analysis of current developments in the world economy and emerging policy issues. The 1994 edition marks the integration of economic and social dimensions of development.

1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development. New York. United Nations. 1994. A/C/E/F/R/S.
Comprehensive analysis of policy issues and concepts related to the advancement of women. Gender approach to poverty and employment.

The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics. New York. United Nations. 1990. Sales No. E.90.XVII.3. $19.95. E.
Uses innovative techniques to highlight indicators on women's conditions world-wide. Shows women's contributions to economic, political and family life.

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(o) UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees):
Public Information. Case Postale 2500. 1211 Geneva 2 Depot. Switzerland

Effective Public Speaking

SOME SUGGESTIONS

Think of speakers who have impressed you. It's likely that they share certain characteristics: an ability to bring dry facts to life, solid knowledge, commitment and a strong desire to communicate. To help those who write speeches and presentations, **Notes for Speakers** assembles in convenient form current information about the UN and selected issues before it. Good factual content is a vital prerequisite of effective public speaking about the UN.

Every topic and audience demand a different approach. On some formal occasions, simply reading a message or a statement may be appropriate. But most general audiences need a sense of interaction with a speaker, and each speaker develops his or her own style and techniques for reaching them. A series of workshops in public speaking for Secretariat officials at UN Headquarters provided practical suggestions for combining content and delivery in public speaking. A few of those suggestions follow:

STRUCTURE

Your speech should have a clear opening, body and closing. The opening should be just two or three minutes long. An opening anecdote, analogy or quote can help crystallize your central message. The body of the speech sould consist of brief and well organized points. Information should be carefully selected to support the central theme and draw on examples, analogies or real-life experiences to animate the topic. Numbers and ratios should be made meaningful by relating them to the experience of the audience. Resist the temptation to say everything you know about a topic. Too much information can be worse than not enough. The body should be 10 to 15 minutes long. The closing should briefly summarize the speech and state its three most important points in one or two minutes.

DELIVERY

Establish real communication with your audience by focusing on them and not "locking" your eyes on your text. Finish each phrase looking at your audience, and look at them to emphasize points or raise questions. Know your topic well enough to depart from the text and extemporise without losing the connection to your main points. Use language that is easily spoken and understood.

Stand with your weight even on both feet. Gestures and facial expressions should be animated and natural, and reinforce main points. Project your voice. An audience that can't hear you can't be interested in what you have to say.

TEXT

It may help to make three versions of your speech: a complete, edited text in paragraph form; a version marked for delivery with underlined words or phrases for emphasis and slashes to separate phrases; and a version which places each phrase on a separate line for ease of reading (a few sample lines of the latter formats follow). Leave wide margins in your text for notes and reminders. Don't staple your text. Slide each page to the side so you can see both the previous and next page.

SAMPLE LAYOUTS
(Edited version with phrasing marks)

Not long ago/I was at a meeting with a colleague who had a terrible toothache./ And although the meeting was about the suffering of people living in poverty/it made very little impact on him./ The pain he was enduring at that moment was far more relevant/than the plight of strangers thousands of miles away./

People who come from developing countries/tend to think that people in the richer, industrialized countries don't realize how severe their problems are./ Because the rich are too absorbed in their own immediate problems./ Although the UN is not an international financial institution/like the World Bank and IMF,/it has an important role to play in international economic problems./ All voices are heard in its debates —/from the poorest countries to the richest. They remind us that all of our economies are interdependent,/and that the problems we face individually/require us to work together.(line-by-line version)

(Line by line version)

1. NOT LONG AGO
   I WAS AT A MEETING WITH A COLLEAGUE
   WHO HAD A TERRIBLE TOOTHACHE.

2. AND ALTHOUGH THE MEETING WAS ABOUT THE SUFFERING OF PEOPLE
   LIVING IN POVERTY
   IT MADE VERY LITTLE IMPACT ON HIM.

3. THE PAIN HE WAS ENDURING AT THAT MOMENT
   WAS FAR MORE RELEVANT THAN THE PLIGHT OF STRANGERS
   THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY.

4. PEOPLE WHO COME FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
   TEND TO THINK
   THAT PEOPLE IN THE RICHER, INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES
   DON'T REALISE
   HOW SEVERE THEIR PROBLEMS ARE.

5. BECAUSE THE RICH ARE TOO ABSORBED IN THEIR OWN PROBLEMS.

6. ALTHOUGH THE UN IS NOT AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION
   LIKE THE WORLD BANK AND IMF
   IT HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY
   IN THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

7. ALL VOICES ARE HEARD IN ITS DEBATES ...
   FROM THE POOREST COUNTRIES ...
   TO THE RICHEST.

8. THEY REMIND US
   THAT ALL OF OUR ECONOMIES ARE INTERDEPENDENT...
   AND THAT THE PROBLEMS WE FACE INDIVIDUALLY
   REQUIRE US TO WORK TOGETHER.

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